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on 27 November, 2018

MARGARET,
VIRGIN MARTYR OF THE OCEAN WAVE.
WITH HER LIKE-MINDED SISTER
AGNES.
"Love many waters cannot quench."—GOD saves
His chosen Imperiled One! in Covenant true.
"O Scotia's Daughters! earnest scan the Page,"
And prize this Flower of Grace, blood-bought for you.
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A MENDACIOUS MONUMENT TO A MYTHICAL MARTYRDOM,

IN THE CEMETERY AT STIRLING.—See p. cii.

HISTORY RESCUED

IN ANSWER TO

"HISTORY VINDICATED"

BEING

A RECAPITULATION OF THE "CASE FOR THE CROWN" AND THE REVIEWERS REVIEWED

IN RE

THE WIGTOWN MARTYRS.

BY MARK NAPIER.

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ET VI ET SÆPE CADENDO.

EDINBURGH:
EDMONSTON AND DOUGLAS;
LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS & CO.
1870.

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THE SECOND EDITION OF "HISTORY VINDICATED."

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A RECAPITULATION

AND

THE REVIEWERS REVIEWED.

Sir Toby.—"Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?"

Clown.—"Yes, by Saint Anne; and ginger shall be hot i' the mouth too."

Twelfth-Night, Act II. Scene 3.

A GOOD many years have now elapsed since the publication (in May 1862) of certain documentary evidence destructive of Wodrow's martyrologies. It was brought to light by myself, during researches undertaken for the purpose of illustrating the true character of Viscount Dundee. These researches necessarily involved a close and critical review, upon principles of legitimate proof, and common sense, of the whole field of Wodrow's fame. The result induced me to enter upon a systematic refutation of his two leading martyrological calumnies, the "Christian Carrier," and the "Wigtown Martyrs." It was plain—and intensely is that now felt by Wodrow's clerical champions in Scotland—that the extinction of those two worse than foolish fables would go far to reduce his Martyrological History to a heap of cumbrous rubbish. Not that this old repertory of fanatical invective and unvouched and *ex parte* accusations—against all guardians of the public safety, whose official duty it was to protect the lieges and the Crown from that reign of the evil one in Scotland, the true type of which is the cowardly murder of Archbishop Sharp—was ever held in anything like universal respect and credit. By readers of a rational and impartial spirit, it was always regarded as the very apocrypha of our troubles; and it was felt to be oppressively repulsive, not so much by reason of its

ungainly style and indiscriminating censure, as because the whole trick of its concoction for a special political purpose, the glaringly one-sided object of the publication, in which the actual truth was but a secondary consideration, the improbability of the greater proportion of its concocted narratives, and the total absence of anything like legitimate proof where proof was most required, haunted and harassed intelligent and impartial minds with the gravest suspicions of its integrity.

Clergymen, indeed, whose education and abilities placed them far above the mere *Mause* school of Presbyterians, were not much inclined to regard Wodrow as their Moses. All their Presbyterian predilections, it is true, were in favour of maintaining his credit if they could. But they were shy of parading enthusiasm on the subject of Wodrow's historical accuracy and martyrological truth. Of this higher and more liberal class of the Scotch clergy who are desirous of upholding Wodrow and his "Sufferings of the Kirk" as a Presbyterian *Institution*, but who shrink from maintaining his martyrological details as historical truth, a distinguished example is Dr Tulloch, Vice-Chancellor and Senior Principal of St Andrews University, Head of St Mary's College, and Primarius Professor of Divinity there.

How I was thanked from the Chair of St Andrews for purifying the History of Scotland.

At the very outset of this Wigtown war I was honoured with particular attention from that high academic chair. The new and startling proofs laid before the public in "Memorials and Letters" of Viscount Dundee, had shaken to the foundation the Primarius Professor's faith in the divinity of Wodrow. It is much to be regretted that his Presbyterian predilections, perhaps duties, prevented the cause of truth, humanity, and justice, from obtaining the support it deserved from that influential quarter, which would have been most valuable. The Professor was pleased, however, to take the field against Memorials of Dundee, and he did so chiefly in the form of a sort of *quasi*-championship of the "Wigtown Martyrs." But in his

highly wrought article, which appeared in "Macmillan's Magazine" for December 1862, Dr Tulloch betrayed so much inconsistency of argument, and uncertainty of mind, and the conclusion at which he arrived was so avowedly *nil*, that, to the dismay of the *Dii minorum gentium* of his sect, he very nearly handed those martyrological mermaids out of the water himself. For my exposition appears to have led him to confess, *multum gemens*, what neither he, nor any other Presbyterian had ever given public utterance to before, that, as regards Wodrow's martyrologies in general, and his Wigtown martyrdom in particular, the "beautiful old stories," as the Principal fondly phrased it, were not true, and that the reverend and revered story-teller was just what that expression is sometimes understood to imply.

"The well-known Wigtown martyrology," he says, "like many other martyrologies, has *evidently* been surrounded with a considerable amount of *fictitious embellishment*. Wodrow's stories *everywhere* bear the stamp of this *imaginative* development." And when the Principal had to face a fact which may be called annihilating against the whole story,—namely, that it distinctly appears, on the face of the Privy Council Register of Scotland, that the two women had been removed to Edinburgh to be pardoned, instead of being left in Wigtown to be drowned,—he deals with it thus:—"But what solution, then, do the *difficulties* of the case admit of? If the women were drowned at Wigtown, what is to be made of the *reprieve* in the Council Register in Edinburgh? *To this question we do not pretend to be able to give a satisfactory answer.*" And well might this Professor doubt whether the answer he nevertheless did attempt would be satisfactory to any but the lowest form of his divinity disciples. "It is the Magistrates of *Edinburgh*," he says, "who, on the 30th of April, are discharged from putting the sentence into execution; yet there is not a *particle* of evidence that the women were removed to Edinburgh." What! Is the State Record, bearing that the women *were in Edinburgh*, not a "particle of evidence" that they had been removed there? No, says Principal Tulloch, because "the expression, Magistrates of Edinburgh, *we cannot help thinking*, is a *clerical error*, the mark of a hastily concocted

and incomplete *document*." Is this the argument of the Primarius of St Andrews? It is more like the reasoning of a tyro who had never cast eyes upon such a record as the Privy Council Register of Scotland—a public archive *omni suspicione major*—and whose unripe intellect had never yet opened to the proper principles upon which documentary evidence is to be weighed and valued, in order to arrive at truth. And what is the *unsatisfactory* conclusion (as he admits it to be) which Dr Tulloch had brought himself to adopt through such reasoning as that? "We are *inclined*," he says, "to believe that the *tradition* rests on a basis of fact, and that the women really suffered at Wigtown. This appears to us the conclusion of an *enlightened historical criticism*, in the view of all the circumstances of the case, and making every allowance for the *difficulties* it involves. Further light may be required to place this conclusion beyond doubt." Further light! What light at all had he cast upon his conclusion? And during the five years which have now elapsed, since that expression of a hope that the disgrace of Scotland would still be saved to it, what further light has there emerged, out of all the laborious struggles of fanaticism to find it, that does not leave the light of this recovered truth brighter than ever? And where in the world is the "difficulty" of giving perfect credence to a State Record, upon which there rests not a shadow of suspicion, against a ridiculous fiction, every narrative of which, whether tricked out for *the nonce* by Wodrow, Sir Walter Scott, or Lord Macaulay (all derived from one and the same impure source), is utterly destitute of an element of probability,—indeed has been shewn to bear falsehood on the very face of it? And surely it says little for the truth of a pretended public fact, of most extensive popular interest, that the only mode yet discovered of proving it to be a fact, is by the not very intelligible process of "an enlightened historical criticism" which leaves the fact *not proven* after all!

This mode of dealing with the question was a heavy blow and great discouragement to the Covenanting Martyrologists of Scotland. But the author of the "Case for the Crown," who had extorted it, was not permitted to cry, *Io triumphans*. In compelling the Principal's common sense, I had sorely

wounded his Covenanting feelings. So, while staggering in his faith, and stumbling in his logic, he steadies himself to run a-muck at the author of "Memorials of Dundee,"—a work (it really seems necessary to state) in which the Principal is not mentioned. Startled and irritated, however, like others of his persuasion, at the unwonted freedom with which a spade is called a spade in convicting Wodrow and Lord Macaulay of the most flagrant calumnies that ever desecrated History, and annoyed at his own mind being thrown into confusion on the subject, the Principal readily undertook the task, for the Brethren, of extinguishing the peccant work with a stroke of his academic pen. The example by which he inculcates his precepts of controversial courtesies is somewhat amusing.

"But of *one thing* we feel confident, that arguments, and *researches*, such as Mr Napier's, are not likely to settle this, or any historical difficulty. His industry may be *laudable*, as his ingenuity is *fertile;* but *sense*, *impartiality*, and *critical sagacity*, are not only *lacking*,—the writer has *no perception* of such qualities. The very atmosphere of his volumes is loaded with suspicion. His *prejudices*, and *personalities*, might provoke indignation, if they did not rather *excite ridicule*."

And having shot these playful bolts, and after industriously extracting certain energetic adjectives of just indignation against Wodrow and his worshippers, and triumphantly exhibiting them, isolated from the text by which they are justified, (a poor trick, by the way, in which he is rivalled by Sir Andrew Agnew and little Jack Horner), the accomplished head of Presbyterian St Mary's relieves his wounded spirit in this unwonted wail for Wodrow, as if officiating at his death-wake. "*Poor Wodrow!* One *learns to respect him*, with all his *gossip* and *narrowmindedness*, when we turn to his pages from such *delirious abuse* as disfigures these "Memoirs of Dundee."

The Minister of Crieff enters appearance for the Covenant.

The first to enter appearance against the "Case for the Crown," which Principal Tulloch had provoked, was the Reverend Dr Cunningham, parish minister of Crieff. This minor canon (or *cannon*) of the kirk, anything but satisfied with the championship of St Andrews, girded himself for the

conflict, and took the field in the "Edinburgh Review." But his blustering article was neither calculated to revive the reputation of that once famous periodical, nor to restore the prestige of the time-honoured martyrologist. Accordingly, the defence for the martyred has not been suffered to rest upon Crieff. A more formidable parish minister, drawing his inspiration directly from the very sand and salt of his settlement, and within hail of the watery ghosts of his two blessed Margarets, has recently entered the arena, with what success we shall presently see. But, through Dr Cunningham of Crieff, Perthshire has had its day, at least, of this dreary and dripping theology. After maintaining an angry argument upon premises of his own, and ignoring entirely the proofs he could not grapple with, the reverend gentleman betook himself to a species of railing, in which he was more at home than in reasoning. "In all seriousness,"—cries the voice from Crieff, —"In all seriousness, we say, that in almost *every page* of these Memorials of Dundee we find language which we had thought *scholars*, and *gentlemen*, had long ago *abandoned* to *harlots* and *fishwives*!"!

Was there *ever* an era of letters in which "scholars and gentlemen" *did* write in such language? "Have we Hiren here?" Or are we engaged with a Chinese junk? I may have cast daggers at *calumny*, but this celestial is assailing *truth* with that species of barbarous missile the very name of which is too offensive for types. We must not quarrel, however, with the minister of Crieff for exhibiting his own familiarity with flowers of speech over which, doubtless, his daily vocation has given him unlimited command. It is the sacred privilege, and duty, of his ministerial office, to converse with, in order to convert, the worst of sinners; and to chasten, even while he is cheapening, the best of scolds. A protest, however, must be entered, in the name of truth, against the *total disregard of it* in that nasty handful of mud so recklessly heaved at "Memorials of Dundee."

My lamented friend, Professor Aytoun, did me great honour in the preliminary notice attached to the finest of all his Lays of the Cavaliers,—"The Execution of Montrose;" and I have good reason to know, that the opinion he there expressed of

my Life of Montrose, he entertained no less of my Life of Dundee. He says,—"A graphic and vivid sketch of the whole will be found in Mr Mark Napier's volume, *The Life and Times of Montrose*,—a work as chivalrous in its tone as the Chronicles of Froissart, and abounding in original and most interesting materials." My bane and antidote are both before me. Somewhere between this enthusiastic commendation from the troubadour of the Cavaliers, and that coarse commination from the covenanter of Crieff, my own future fame may haply find a more fitting pedestal than either upon which to rest and be thankful. And of the review in question I shall only say this much more, that, if some energetic, perfectly applicable, purely English, and certainly not immodest, expressions of indignant truth against a hot-bed of calumny, is to be characterised as "*delirious abuse*" by such a scholar as the Principal of St Andrews, I think I have earned a right to pronounce of Dr Cunningham, that his railing article in the "Edinburgh Review" must have been composed under the trepidation of the *delirium tremens* of a covenanting panic.

The minister of Crieff may go down, and the minister of Glasserton come on.[1]

The great Dagon of Presbyterian Scotland, its martyrological *Institution*, has been cast down, and the clerical gentlemen, its high priests, are naturally both alarmed and exasperated. The "Faithful Contendings," the "Dying Testimonies," the "Railing Rabshekas," of a thousand Cameronian "controversial pamphlets of the time,"—the *alpha* and *omega* of the minister of Glasserton's lore on the subject,—cannot raise their Dagon again. But the Institution dies hard, like a stranded whale,—and very like a whale it is. *Cave caudam!* gentle reader. The monster has an ugly trick with its tail, every joint of which is a minister, and the fork of it is Sir Andrew Agnew. The shifting sands of the Blednoch are working like

[1] "History Vindicated, in the case of the Wigtown Martyrs, Margaret Lauchlison and Margaret Wilson, drowned at Wigtown 11th May 1685; in answer to Mr Mark Napier's 'Case for the Crown, *in re* the Wigtown Martyrs proved to be Myths,' &c. By the Rev. Archibald Stewart, Minister of Glasserton."

barm, and the daily press of whiggery is getting choked with the salt of the Solway, so that it is perfect martyrdom for the modern political *quidnuncs* to unfold the "Scotsman" newspaper, which has become "terrible as an army with banners." But let us turn to

"*History Vindicated.*"

Who is the Vindicator? The Reverend Archibald Stewart, minister of Glasserton. If the minister of martyr-ridden Glasserton was to write at all on the subject, what else could he have written than what we find here? He is the *genius loci.* He had no new proof to produce. He had nothing to say but what had been said in various forms before, and thoroughly refuted from the first. He had nothing to argue but what had been argued before, and successfully answered.. He could only do what had been often done before, and will never cease to be done so long as a Wodrowite exists in Scotland, viz.—uphold the truth and sanctity of Wodrow's unvouched and libellous collections of "Sufferings of the Kirk," against evidence, negative and positive, direct and presumptive, demonstrating its falsity and exaggerations; against all the soundest principles of evidence; against all probability, and common sense itself. But could he avoid drawing the pen? Certainly not. Glasserton to the rescue! Glasserton had to redeem this Wigtonshire martyrdom from the damage it received from St Andrews, and to take it out of the hands of its feeble nursing mother Crieff. And accordingly this worthy parish minister, of the most infected district, with an imposing assumption of superior solemnity, and an affectation of logical arrangement, the real object of which is to derange and confuse a thoroughly proven case standing against him, just adopts their old familiar method of assuming facts, and ignoring evidence.

I am told at the outset what my portion is to be. "His *logic* will be freely examined, but his *style* will not be noticed, and will not be imitated" I don't think you could if you tried, Glasserton. My style is *unique.* And let me tell you, after my own style, in reply to this pomposity of Presbyterian reproof, that if there were not at least one funny fellow amongst

us all, to enliven somewhat this weary, dreary divinity, this mouldy chapter out of rusty, musty, fusty Wodrow, the critical and Christian public would mind us no more than if we were *Mause* and *Cuddy*.

It seems, however, that I, and the public, had nearly escaped this present infliction altogether, on the score of the "weakness" of my Case for the Crown. "Some may think,"—says my reverend opponent,—"that so weak an argument has already received all the attention it deserves, and that it is fitted to do *little harm*." Harm to what? To the morals of Scotch martyrology to be sure. But mark the good, by Vindicator's own shewing, that it has done. He thus proceeds: "But weak though it is, it has *made some converts even in Galloway*, and more perhaps *elsewhere*, where the circumstances of the case are less known." *Hinc illæ lachrymæ*. If my little finger have been felt on the loins of Galloway, I am satisfied with its weight. And as for the "elsewhere," it would not have been far from the truth to have said, *everywhere else*. Indeed, the most distinguished of the critical periodicals in the lighter departments of letters have pronounced in favour of what the minister of Glasserton pretends to think is too weak to deserve an answer; and for his edification I may here give an example or two:—

Fraser's Magazine.

Before this "Case for the Crown" was published, as a special reply to Principal Tulloch, and as a more extensive dealing with the subject which I had treated less systematically in "Memorials of Dundee," that work had already satisfied *Fraser's Magazine* that the Wigtown Martyrs were a myth. In an article entitled "What is Truth?" written for the October number, 1862, the question is ably taken in hand, and the proofs which I had brought forward are very closely examined, and carefully epitomized,—leading the accomplished author of "What is Truth?" to the following conclusions on the subject:—

"The story of the devout women who died in Blednoch is one of the most touching episodes in Lord Macaulay's history, and constitutes one

of the darkest indictments against the Government. Old Margaret Maclachlan, and her youthful companion, '*a virgin martyr eighteen years of age*,' occupy a lofty position among the truth-seekers who have sealed their testimony with their blood. They have been used alike by poet and partizan. There is scarcely a boy or girl in Scotland who has not been taught with the catechism the story of their wrongs. Yet recent research has succeeded in discrediting the popular tradition; and has, at least, exonerated the Scottish government from any participation in an act of wanton cruelty.

"It was from Wodrow that Lord Macaulay borrowed the raw materials of his narrative. *Wodrow* and *Walker* are in fact the only authorities who can be called contemporary. Wodrow's narrative was published in 1722; Walker's in 1727; so that nearly forty years had passed before the earliest *narrative* of the event was printed. Neither writer is to be implicitly relied on. The historian of the Sufferings of the Kirk was a good hater, and an unscrupulous partisan, with a huge appetite for the marvellous: Peter the Pedler an illiterate enthusiast. They did not attempt to separate the wheat from the chaff of the old wives' fables they recorded. All was meal that came to their mill. A Federal newspaper's account of a Confederate defeat, is, as a general rule, scarcely more incredible than the stories of James Grahame (*sic*) and Chancellor Rothes which these writers narrate. These are the authorities upon the point; but the industry of Mr Mark Napier has enabled us to trace their inspiration to its source.

"Putting the various narratives together, the following appear to be the leading '*facts*' of the case:—1. The two daughters of Wilson were tried and condemned, one of them *a girl of thirteen*.—2. That they were condemned for their '*religion*,' because, as Lord Macaulay puts it, 'they would not abjure *the cause of the Covenant*, and *attend the Episcopal worship*.'—3. That Margaret Maclachlan in particular was considered an obstinate offender, on whom threats and entreaties were alike thrown away. 'The old woman,' Walker remarks in his strong way, 'was first tied to the stake, *enemies* saying,—It is needless to speak to that old damned bitch: let her go to hell.' That is the evidence upon which, *in re* Wodrow *versus* the Scottish Government, the story rests. It is *not the evidence of eye-witnesses*. It is evidence collected by industrious partisans thirty or forty years after the events occurred. As such it is tainted evidence—the evidence of the parties to the cause—and consequently peculiarly open to observation and exception. On the other hand, the evidence for the defence is *strong*, *intelligible*, and *consistent*."

Blackwood's Magazine.

In "Blackwood's" December number for 1863, after Principal Tulloch's article in "Macmillan," and my answer to it in this "Case" were before the public, an article appeared, entitled

"The Wigtown Martyrs: Principal Tulloch and Mr Mark Napier,"—from another able and accomplished pen. In this, too, the whole evidence was keenly and impartially scrutinised, and the following conclusion arrived at:—

"The conclusion at which we arrive is, that Mr Napier has made out his case, that he has satisfactorily established that there is no reason whatever for believing that these women ever were drowned at all. This conclusion is one which ought to be satisfactory to everybody. We will not commit such an injustice to Principal Tulloch as to suspect that his zeal can so far cloud his Christianity as to prevent him from sincerely rejoicing at the proof that a great crime was not committed."

The Saturday Review.

This acute and very critical journal, in an article on "The Wigtown Martyrs," less elaborate than the two former, but dealing with the proofs very fairly, and slurring over nothing of importance, came substantially to the same conclusion:—

"The publication of Mr Napier's *Memoirs of Dundee* has led to a very minute examination of the details of this alleged case of martyrdom; and it is now *admitted on all hands*, even by the warmest advocates of the martyrs,[1] that the graphic circumstances which tell so much in Macaulay's picture, are some of them untrue, and most of them utterly inconsistent with the other narrative of the scene that has been printed. A reader of ordinary reflection will perceive that, where the tide runs so rapidly as on the Solway, several of the details are *physically* impossible. All, therefore, that is now contended for by the admirers of the martyrs is, that though the details may be subsequent and doubtful embellishments, the martyrdom itself was a real historical occurrence. Mr Napier, however, has undertaken to shew that the whole is a pure fiction; and such an attempt has naturally provoked the ire of the *Edinburgh Review*, which, in spite of Macaulay himself, affects to respect the heroes of the Covenant as the promoters of civil and religious liberty."

And after entering systematically into the proofs relied upon in the "Case for the Crown," and comparing them with the arguments pressed in the "Edinburgh Review," the "Saturday" thus concludes:—

"And this is the evidence with which the Reviewer hopes to overthrow clear inferences from State papers! The details collected by the Kirk-

[1] This is said in reference to Principal Tulloch's conversion; but certainly not in reference to such admirers of the martyrdom as the ministers of Crieff and of Glasserton, or Sir Andrew Agnew.

sessions of *Kirkinner* and *Penninghame*, instead of corroborating the other evidence, stand themselves in need of confirmation. The accumulated gossip of ignorant, fanatical peasants, in the second generation from the alleged event, it bears the same relation to history that Munchausen's travels do to those of Livingstone. Similar traditions, in any quantity, may still be collected in the same district; but the incredulous scorn with which they would be received, deters all but the wildest enthusiast from the undertaking.[1] We do not say that Mr Napier's conclusion is beyond the reach of assault. Some fortuitous discovery may annihilate it; and it would evidently be materially strengthened by any information as to the subsequent lives of the two presumed martyrs. The assault of the *Edinburgh Reviewer*, however, has not dislodged him from a single position, and has only served to make manifest the weakness of his own case. With foes so unwearied as Mr Napier, and friends so weak and injudicious as the *Edinburgh Reviewer*, the fate of the 'Martyrs of the Covenant' may be easily prognosticated. The *star of Wodrow has been too long in the ascendant;* and his history, after misleading three generations, will probably soon be consigned to that oblivion from which the forgotten history of Fox unhappily raised it."

The present Vindicator of Wodrow—for if he cannot vindicate the martyrdogist's history, there is no other history he can vindicate in the matter—has been reared in the faith that Wodrow is not only the salt of the Solway, but the salt of the earth. If Wodrow be put down, all history vanishes. Such is the sum and substance of the Glasserton argument. But to do the author full justice, we shall quote his own words, although the precise meaning is not always easily extricated from the imposing verbiage:—

"Mr Napier may intend merely to destroy the credibility of Wodrow, but many will think that his argument, *if sound*, will reach a great way farther. If a history which was *got up* as Wodrow's was, and which, though published while many were *still living* who *were witnesses* of the events related, was *nevertheless* not contradicted, is proved now to be *utterly false*, not merely as to its views and opinions, but as to its very facts—what history can be accepted as true?"

Why, to be sure, all history that can be proved to be true, and is not proved to be false. All history written and vouched in the accurate and impartial spirit of true history, and not "*got up* as Wodrow's was." I by no means intended to limit

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[1] It has not deterred Sir Andrew Agnew,—of whom afterwards.

myself to destroying the credibility of Wodrow. I aim even so high as to destroy the credibility of Wodrow's prompters and promoters, especially the Kirk-sessions of Kirkinner and of Penninghame,—which, by the way, destroy each other; for their separate romances have come into such a collision of inconsistency as to leave little else than their tails to be interred. And what means that note of alarm,—"But many will think that his argument, if sound, will reach a great way further." My argument is simply this, that the martyrologist's statements of fact are destroyed by the proofs which I have opposed to them. If that be sound, the further it reaches the better. *Fiat justitia ruat cælum.* God be praised, however, Wodrow is not *cælum*, although this minister seems to think so. We have all heard of an argument that proves too much. But that means an unsound argument. To prove Wodrow to be false, may indeed reach so far as to prove that they who informed and prompted him were false also. But that is no instance of an argument proving too much for the arguer's case. And what does Vindicator mean, when he speaks of "a history *though* published while many were still living who *were witnesses* of the events related," being "*nevertheless* not contradicted?" Why, if that were the true state of the case—as most assuredly it is *not*—it *could* not have been contradicted then, and it *would* not have been contradicted now. But the passage quoted above contains two of those bold and baseless assumptions of fact, the liberal use of which composes the staple of this "Vindication of History" by the minister of Glasserton. He has the hardihood to assume, as a fact not to be contradicted, that when Wodrow, in 1722, published his melo-drama of drowning, "many were still living who *were witnesses* of the events narrated." This would settle the whole case if *we had their evidence.* Vindicator argues as if we had. But there is not a vestige of evidence to support the bold assertion. And then he adds,—"*nevertheless* it was not contradicted." What manner of reasoning, and what mode of dealing with facts, is this! For this last assertion is *directly in the teeth of the proved facts.* But when the Vindicator comes to expand these postulates of his in the form of an argument, he falls into a medley of *ifs*, and *ans*, and *musts*, and into

a muddle of *non sequiturs,* which enable us to detect what he really means, and exposes the extreme weakness of his case:—

"If such a *notorious* fact," proceeds the reverend gentleman, "as the public execution of two women by drowning, was recorded on the authority of the kirk-sessions of the *two parishes* to which the women belonged, of men who held the status of office-bearers in the Established Church, and who were living in those parishes at the time of the execution, and were then old enough to remember it; *if* the narrative was published while many were still living who *must* have had personal knowledge of what took place, and yet was not then contradicted and disproved by those who *must* have *felt themselves* called on to repel a calumnious falsehood; *if*, after having stood on the page of history for a century and a half *without challenge*, the story of the execution is *disproved now*, what fact in history can be regarded as certainly true? If Wodrow's two folios have vanished under Mr Napier's *reasoning*, those who are best able to estimate the value of his *proof* will probably come to the conclusion that *most other* historical folios will vanish likewise when subjected to a similar test."

What is all this verbiage but assuming, that in Wodrow's time there *must* have been many eye-witnesses to the facts then living—*ergo*, the fact is proved by eye-witnesses! But *who* were these eye-witnesses? *Where* is there a vestige of the testimony of any one of them? Echo answers. If the fact be *not* a fact, could any witnesses have seen it?

It will be observed, moreover, that Vindicator, in weaving his tissue of assumptions and conjectures, has the art to insert incidentally, every here and there, some fact as proved, which not only has he not proved, but which has been *disproved.* For instance, in the above passage, he takes the liberty to say, that "the public execution of the *two women* by drowning was recorded on the authority of the kirk-sessions of the *two parishes* to which the women belonged." An unwary reader is here entrapped into the belief, that each of these kirk-sessions recorded the drowning of *both* women, and in similar terms; so that they mutually confirm each other, whereby that species of proof is doubled! But what is the fact on the face of the parish records themselves? Their respective narratives differ so widely as to *destroy* each other. Under the circumstances of the case,—which are of that nature, that, had the story been true, the narratives of these adjoining kirk-

sessions could not have differed as they do,—*neither* can stand for truth. Moreover, *Kirkinner* parish (whose record, consequently, is rejected by Wodrow) only narrates the drowning of *one* woman, while *Penninghame* it is that, for the first time, furnishes the double martyrdom for Wodrow's "Sufferings."

Then we have the imposing plea—a magniloquent note of empty alarm—that "if, after having stood on the page of history for a century and a half without challenge, the story of the execution is *disproved* now, what fact in history can be regarded as certainly true?" Why, the fact, for one, that these women were *pardoned*, and *not drowned*. If "proved now to be utterly false"—which is just the state of the case—is it of any consequence whatever that it received no contradiction at the time,—which, however, is *not* the state of the case? If really false, what matters it how long it has "stood on the page of history,"—which here just means *Wodrow's* history? Is that any reason why it may not be expunged from the page of true history in future? There is no period of prescription that runs in favour of falsehood. *Nunquam præscribitur in falso.* But any one of ordinary reading and common apprehension will at once see through this flimsy argument of no contradiction having arisen at the time, in the shape of a published or recorded controversy on the proof. To have met, in a public and systematic manner, every false or exaggerated accusation against the fallen dynasty, and the Episcopalian character, that was set down in Wodrow's collection of "Sufferings," would have required two folios bigger than his own; published, too, when Episcopalian Scotland had just been savagely rabbled, and lay under the yoke of a grosser tyranny than ever was exercised by the Stuarts. But is that notorious state of matters, in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, to be gravely pressed upon this enlightened generation, as *probatio probata* of a universal *consent*, given in times *assumed* by the minister of Glasserton to have been best informed as to Wodrow's truth, although the falsity of his fanatical romance can be distinctly proved now?

"In place of being contradicted and disproved," says this boldest of Vindicators, "it has been repeated as a fact by all respectable historians down to our times." Yes—repeated out

of Wodrow, *ipsissimis verbis*, many years afterwards—though not after any scrutiny of Wodrow's fables; but by some, for instance Sir Walter Scott, for the sake of the tragical romance, and by Lord Macaulay and others, for the sake of the political calumny. "It is only *lately*," proceeds Vindicator, "that it has been called in question by Mr Napier in his *Memorials of Dundee*, and in his more recent work, the *Case for the Crown*, expressly designed to prove the Wigtown Martyrs to be myths, and the received story regarding them to be a fable and a calumny."

I own the soft impeachment, and am charmed with the compliment. But if Wodrow was never called in question until now by myself, he had been *disproved*, by anticipation, in this very matter, long ere his history was "got up," and by one who never cast a thought upon his existence. He was disproved, by anticipation, not in the low field of Cameronian tractarianism (which the worthy minister of Glasserton appears to have persuaded himself is history), but in the academic seclusion and repose at Oxford of that great and accomplished man, Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh,[1] compared with whom—to adopt the characteristic simile of an old Scotch song—Wodrow was as "a docken to a tansy." But we must now bring the reverend "Vindicator of History" deliberately and precisely to his bearings on the question of proof.

Wodrow's admission that the Penninghame Kirk-session's story of the Wigtown Martyrdom was, at the time of its concoction, denied to be true by the loyalists in Scotland.

It is to be noted that the minister of Glasserton, in quoting, and insisting for the truth of that story, with all its "embellishments," carefully avoids giving the version of it that is to be found in Wodrow. This seems not a little singular, as *Wodrow's history* is that which he has undertaken to vindicate, especially as regards the Wigtown Martyrs. But *causa patet.*

[1] See "Case for the Crown," p. 47.

The Martyrologist's own record of the martyrdom in question, which, in other respects, is just a literal transcript of what was given to him by his friend Mr Rowan, the minister of Penninghame, happens to contain two very conspicuous and important passages, one at the beginning, and the other at the conclusion, of this fabulous story. These two passages are not to be found either in the kirk-session register, or in Lord Macaulay's mutilation of Wodrow. The nobilitated historian of England could not fail to be perfectly cognisant of the two passages in question; for, in all other respects, he just copies Wodrow's account, a little dressed by himself, and he refers to no other authority for the story. But his object in inserting this episode at all,—which was to revile James the Second's government of Scotland,—rendered it quite impossible for him to give us the story without mutilating Wodrow's text. And to do this might seem safe enough; for not one out of a thousand of Lord Macaulay's readers was likely to have ever cast eyes upon Wodrow's history, or to think of doing so. Now, the first of the two omitted passages is that in which Wodrow himself tells us (after his own peculiar fashion), that the truth of the story, prior to his publication of it in 1722, was *denied by many*. And the concluding passage is Wodrow's own announcement (also very clumsily managed, so as to suit his own history), that, after recording the story as given him by the minister of Penninghame, he had *suddenly* discovered, by a private inspection of the then latent, and all but inaccessible, Register of the Privy Council of Scotland for the year of the martyrdom, that the two women had been *pardoned!* These two passages must have been directly under Lord Macaulay's own eye when he was quoting Wodrow nearly *verbatim*. But imagine how they would have demolished his scheme had he inserted them! He had to choose between omitting the calumnious episode altogether, or suppressing the redeeming passages. It is not to the credit of Lord Macaulay, as a historian, that the latter course is the one he adopted. If the fact does not shake the credit of his history, at all events it utterly destroys it as an authority for the truth of the Wigtown martyrdom.

But this *suppressio veri*, which nullifies Lord Macaulay's authority in the question of proof, just renders his version more

subservient to the purpose of the author of "History Vindicated." Accordingly, the reverend gentleman thus opens what may be called the Second Wigtown War:—"Was the sentence executed? That is the point now disputed, though, in every history down to our times, the execution has been recorded as a fact." And this brings him to the point where it becomes necessary that he should repeat the story as recorded. Now, as the very few historians who happen to have adorned their pages with this *ad captandum* drowning scene (of which no official, or even semi-official, record exists), all adopt it upon the sole authority of Wodrow, and as the minister of Glasserton maintains that authority to be paramount, it might have been expected that he would have furnished the details from the fountain head, the "Sufferings of the Kirk." For the reverend gentleman has set himself, expressly and controversially, to establish the truth of Wodrow's story. He takes the field in most formidable array against the "Case for the Crown," ushered by trumpets also and shawms, loudly blown by a Presbyterian brother in the *Scotsman* newspaper, to re-establish, upon the basis of superior evidence, the truth of an *ex facie* improbable legend of the Covenanting Kirk, which had been demolished by the proof recently produced against it. Wodrow's own narrative, then, ought to be the foundation of "History Vindicated." But no such thing. The author of that tract could not fail to see that a full quotation of Wodrow's text was rather to be eschewed in founding the argument he was about to maintain. For the Martyrologist's own introduction, to the kirk-session extract which he received from his friend the minister of Penninghame, is worse than discouraging; and the very strange conclusion, which Wodrow himself also added, is absolutely destructive of the story. So his Vindicator selects a safer version of the martyrdom with which to commence operations. He selects one which will not, on the very face of it, at once contradict his leading proposition, namely, that the so-called "tradition" of the execution in question was unvarying and uncontradicted *from the date of its occurrence.* "Lord Macaulay," he says, "thus gives the *substance* of Wodrow's *more extended* narrative of the tragic fate of these two women;" and then he quotes, *in extenso*, that historian's

claptrap mutilation of Wodrow, the Martyrologist's *extensions* being just that which destroy his story; and these, consequently, the cautious Solway divine reserves for incidental notices where they are much less likely to attract the reader's attention, and where they are not in damaging juxtaposition with his main argument.

Now, Reverend Sir, I would not for the world have you imitate my style. But as regards fulness of record, and fairness of quotation, you might take example by the "Case for the Crown." In that I had given both the substance of Wodrow's narrative as quoted by Macaulay, and the whole of it, in its most extended form, with all its contradictions, and all those *impossibilities*, which Principal Tulloch, with great tenderness, called "embellishments," from Wodrow's own text. And in case "History Vindicated" ever come to a second edition, the worthy minister of Glasserton will perhaps be so good as to insert in their proper places the two following passages, being the beginning and the conclusion of Wodrow's very long intermediate narrative, and place them in immediate juxtaposition with his own argument of "no contradiction."

Wodrow's commencement of the Story.

"Upon the 11th of May (1685) we meet with the barbarous and wicked execution of two excellent women, near Wigtown,—Margaret M'Lauchlin and Margaret Wilson. History scarce affords a parallel to this in all its circumstances, and therefore I shall give it at the greater length; and the *rather*, because the *advocates for the cruelty of this period*, and *our Jacobites*, have the *impudence*, some of them *to deny*, and others to *extenuate*, this matter of fact, which *can be* fully evinced by many living witnesses."

Wodrow's conclusion of the Story.

"It is of *more importance to observe*, that, in the Council Registers, *since I wrote what is above*, I find what follows:—'April last, Margaret Wilson and Margaret M'Lauchlison, under sentence of death, are continued till [blank in the record]; and the Lords of His Majesty's Privy Council recommend it to the Secretaries to procure their remission.'[1] The day to

[1] Wodrow gives this under marks of quotation, as if a *verbatim* extract. But it is not so. It is garbled *in essentialibus* for an obvious purpose. Of this afterwards.

which they are reprieved is blank in the records; but I may safely suppose it would be for a *longer day*[1] than the 11th of May, there being scarcely time betwixt the 30th of April and that to get a return from the Secretaries. *Indeed*, at this time, a recommendation from the Council for a remission was looked upon as a *material pardon;* and if I may *conjecture*, Gilbert Wilson, when he, *as we heard*, after the *sentence of all the three*,[2] made application to Edinburgh, seems to have *prevailed* as to all the three, and the case was *extremely favourable. If* matters stand thus, the *people of Wigtown* are deeply guilty, and had *no powers* for what they did; and the death of these persons was what the Council *ought to have prosecuted them for*." [3]

To the annihilating fact, announced by the Martyrologist in

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[1] This was mere ignorance on the part of Wodrow. The date *blank* was not a clerical omission. The Privy Council Record is in the most orderly condition, and carefully written. It is impossible that so important a date, in a matter of life and death, could have been omitted by a mere blunder of the clerk of Council. No limit to the reprieve had been assigned, and a blank is left where the date would have been. It was a reprieve *sine die;* a *pardon*, in fact, because the convicts had petitioned the Privy Council to be allowed to retract the treasonable contumacy for which they had been condemned, which petition had been granted, the oath taken by them under the orders of the Privy Council, and the women (whom the Government were *most anxious* not to execute) pardoned accordingly. Principal Tulloch commits the same puerile mistake, when he endeavours to get rid of the unanswerable argument afforded by the State Record, by slighting it as "an obviously incomplete document, the dates are not filled in."

[2] The *third* victim, so coolly *assumed* by Wodrow, was, by his own account, "a child not thirteen years." Can there be a doubt that she was neither tried nor sentenced? There was a *special law of exemption* in favour of children. Moreover, there was a special order issued to this very Commission, that no *woman* should be tried unless very forward in sedition. See "Case for the Crown," p. 26.

[3] It did not suit Wodrow's purpose to allow the rational consideration to enter his mind, that the fact of no one being prosecuted for this alleged most desperate outrage upon the law, and utter contempt of the power of the Government, and of the royal prerogative, is excellent evidence that no such outrage had occurred. The "prosecution" of such murderous delinquents would have been in the form of the most summary and stern dealing with them. Wodrow expressly admits that the women were virtually *pardoned* by a unanimous order of the whole Privy Council of Scotland. But so confused and distorted had the Martyrologist's not very strong mind become on the subject of the "Sufferings of the Kirk," that he regarded a judgment of the Privy Council for *condemnation* and *death*, to be *irresistible;* but that their judgment for *pardon* and *life*, might be treated as waste paper!

that strange postscript (which Lord Macaulay utterly ignores), it will be necessary to recur in this Recapitulation. I must first, however, bring the reverend Vindicator's leading argument,—viz. that the martyrdom in question was never denied until now,—to the test of another version, of this "beautiful old story," which he has not ventured to notice at all.

Patrick Walker's confirmation of Wodrow's admission, that the fact of the execution of these women was denied in their day.

Wodrow's version was published in 1722. Five years afterwards, in 1727, Patrick Walker, the pedler, or chapman of such wares, who, like the minister of Glasserton, was a vindicator, published a tract, entitled "Vindication of Mr Cameron's Name," in which he gives that very blasphemous version of the martyrdom, which will be found quoted in the "Case for the Crown."[1] I need here only repeat the commencement of it:—

"The broth was hell-hot in these days. They wanted long spoons that supped with the devil. I could give *many instances*, but, at this time, shall only mention the drowning of those two women at Wigtown, the 11th day of May 1685, which SOME DENY TO BE MATTER OF FACT."

Is the reverend Vindicator really prepared to contradict Wodrow and Walker, those two evangels of his gospel of the sainted Margarets? It would seem so; for thus he opens the Second Wigtown War:—

"The following pages are designed to exhibit the proof of a historical fact which has *lately* been disputed, viz., the execution by drowning of Margaret Lauchlison and Margaret Wilson at Wigtown, during the persecution for religion in 1685. This fact was stated in the *controversial pamphlets of the time*,[2] and was *never directly denied*. A full account of it was published in Wodrow's History in 1722, on the authority of the local church courts, who made themselves *responsible* for its truth.[3] Though this story of martyrdom was thus given to the world just thirty-seven years after the event is said to have taken place, and while many were still living who were personally acquainted with all the facts of the case, no one came forward then to say, 'This story is false and calumnious.'"

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[1] See "Case for the Crown," p. 131.

[2] Of what time?

[3] And for its falsehood.

Nay, Vindicator; Wodrow and Walker, with an interval of five years between their publications, both tell us the *very reverse.* Are we to believe them or the minister of Glasserton? A large and intelligent class of the community *denied the truth of this execution,* in point of fact. If this denial be a fact, can we doubt that they had said, "this story is false and calumnious?" And, Reverend Sir, did it never occur to *your* logic, as a strong confirmation of that indignant denial,—and far more to the purpose than your own assumption of no contradiction,—that, of the "many living who were personally acquainted with all the facts of the case," no one came forward then to say, 'I was an *eye-witness* of the fact which you call false and calumnious.' From that hour to this no statement of the kind has ever been discovered. Neither does there exist anywhere the slightest official record, or notice, of what Patrick the Pedler might well call "that extraordinary and *unheard-of* death."

It does not, indeed, follow, because both of these martyrologists complained, and in bitter terms, that the loyalists, and men of calm judgment in Scotland opposed to calumnies against the Government, denied that these two women were executed, —that therefore they were *not* executed. But it *does* follow, and we must claim particular attention from our reverend opponent to the important circumstance, that, in point of fact, it was *so denied,* and denied throughout a series of years. The date of the joint-stock, embellished, kirk-sessional concoction of the romance, is 1711. Wodrow got the extract from his friend the minister some time between that date and 1722, the date of the Martyrologist's publication of it. Walker published his blaspheming version in 1727. Throughout a period, then, of fifteen or sixteen years, or at least from some time *prior* to 1722, and down to 1727, the *fact of the execution* was denied by a large and intelligent class of the community. That such was actually the case, Vindicator cannot be heard to deny. The fact would never have been stated at all, by such writers, had it not been a *notorious* fact; and a fact so bruited abroad, and among so large a class of intelligence, as to alarm the purveyors of these kirk-sessional contributions to "Sufferings;" contributions which only dated back to 1711. So, there were *two contemporaneous* "traditions," running par-

allel in direct contradiction of each other! Is that *tradition*, in a question of proof?

The worthy minister of Glasserton, therefore, must not flatter himself that, in his leading argument, he is vindicating Wodrow's History. He is *contradicting* Wodrow. The martyrological minister of Eastwood says that the loyalists, and supporters of the late dynasty, had the impudence to deny the truth of the martyrdom, the details of which he is about to record for the first time in 1722. In 1867, the martyrological minister of Glasserton's argument is, that Mr Mark Napier has the impudence (beg pardon, *confidence*) to impugn that martyrdom now, which was *never impugned before*. That's scarcely fair, Vindicator. I denied the truth of the martyrdom now, *expressly* for this, among many other more substantial reasons, that it was *extensively denied* between 1711 and 1727. So that cock of yours won't fight, Glasserton. Never mind the style. You must submit to, and fairly face, the fact which both Wodrow and Walker have so abusively recorded, as to the at least *divided* state of the "tradition" in their time.

Well. Did Wodrow proceed instantly to put an extinguisher upon the "impudence" which stood in the way of *his* "tradition?" No. He only told a story, precisely as it had been minuted by a martyrological kirk-session for a special purpose, a story bearing falsehood on the face of it; and he backed it by an assertion of his own, so disingenuous as to amount to an *allegatio falsi*. Before proceeding, let me illustrate this.

Wodrow says, after denouncing the "impudence" of those who denied the martyrdom,—"I shall mostly give my narrative of it from an account I have from Mr Rowan, now with the Lord, late minister of Penninghame, where Margaret Wilson lived, who was at pains to have its circumstances *fully vouched* by witnesses, *whose attestations are in my hands.*"[1] But what terms are we to apply to Wodrow's testimony, when it is discovered that this was all a sham; that he had no "attestations by witnesses in his hands;" and that neither had

[1] See "Case for the Crown," p. 8.

his friend the minister of Penninghame any such attestations to give him! The martyrdom in question is not recorded by itself. Neither is it specifically attested at all. It occurs, in the minute-book of the Penninghame kirk-session, under the same date as many other stories of "sufferings," expressly collected for *the nonce;* and at the end of the collection, a *general attestation* is given, by way of authenticating the whole. The very unsatisfactory, if not suspicious form of this attestation, I shall here repeat, taking the liberty to interject certain queries for the minister of Glasserton's consideration.

"The session having considered *all* the above particulars, and having *certain* knowledge [*what degree of certainty?*] of the *most part* of them [*which part?*], from their *own sufferings*, and *eye-witnesses* [*who?*] of the foresaid sufferings [*which of the sufferings?*] of others, in the very time and place they were acted in, and many living [*who?*] that have all these things fresh in their memory—except of these things concerning Gilbert Milroy, the truth whereof they think there is *no ground to doubt of*,—they *do attest the same*, and orders an extract to be given in their name to the Presbytery, to submit to superior judicatories. *Sederunt closed with prayer.*"

Now, the reverend John Wodrow had obtained, from his friend the minister of Penninghame, a full extract of those minutes, including the above *general* attestation. He quotes that extract *in extenso,* but omits the general attestation. Why? Because it suited him better to state the attestation in a deceptive form of his own. He says, expressly and specifically of the Wigtown melodrama, that Mr Rowan "was at pains to have its circumstances *fully vouched by witnesses whose attestations are in my hands.*" This of course means eye-witnesses. But not a vestige of any such thing is to be found in the minutes of Penninghame. Not a vestige among Wodrow's voluminous manuscript collections preserved in the Advocates' Library. Not a trace of any such attestations in Wodrow's published History of the Sufferings of the Kirk, where the Wigtown Martyrdom —"which some had the impudence to deny"—occupies so important a page. Are we to believe that the minister of Penninghame put into the hands of Wodrow attestations by eye-witnesses, of this most valuable martyrdom, which attestations he nevertheless did not record in the Penninghame minute-book—a record of the most verbose and tedious character, con-

taining no less than twenty-nine different *ex parte* cases of collected "Sufferings," all of more or less improbability? Are we to believe that Wodrow had such specific and precious attestations in his own hands, and yet did not insert them either in text or appendix of his History, to support the most marvellous of martyrdoms, the falsehood of which was, at the very time, cast in his teeth until he gnashed them? Manifestly, Wodrow had nothing whatever to shew, to justify that deceptive statement of his, but the kirk-sessional attestation *in general terms*, as quoted above, which he fails to insert, preferring to substitute a most disingenuous pretence of his own.

All this cuts the ground from the feet of our present reverend opponent, to an extent which leaves him very little to stand upon. His "nevertheless *not* contradicted," turns out to be nevertheless *widely* contradicted. And his reiterated *assumption*, that this *unique* martyrdom of 1685—first gathered on special commission, and then cooked in kirk-sessional conclave, for a special political purpose in 1711, and first published for the same purpose in 1722—was founded upon the testimony of those who were *eye-witnesses to the fact*, turns out to be utterly unsupported by a shadow of evidence to that effect.[1]

How the Minister of Glasserton gathers grapes from thistles.

Some think that by reversing the copy of a portrait, a better test will be obtained of its accuracy. When the minister of Glasserton finds the evidence dead against him, he turns the principle upside down, and discovers that it is all right for him. Mustering courage at last to face Wodrow's very damaging admission, that the truth of his story was impugned,

[1] The minister of Glasserton (who imagines he can prove his case by natal and obituary notices of the members of these kirk-sessions in 1711), tells us,—"The Penninghame minute-book shews who were the men who at that time composed the kirk-session, where they lived, when they were ordained, and consequently what opportunities they must have had of knowing the truth of what they attested."—(*Vindication*, p. 48.) It would have been more to the purpose, had the Penninghame minute-book given us the attestation of a single eye-witness, *directly from the individual*. But they had it not to give.

his Vindicator takes an upside-down view of the fact, and gathers from it, some how or other, that the story impugned is true. A good specimen of the nature of his case, and the style of his reasoning, occurs in the following passage, which I shall quote entire:—

"The year 1722—not the year 1863—was *clearly* the time to write the 'Case for the Crown,' provided the Crown had any case. There were, doubtless, *more Jacobites then than now;* and had the history given by Wodrow been false and calumnious, as it is now said to be, it is *morally certain* that some one would then have *proved*, when it could easily have been proved, the *negative* in the case of the Wigtown martyrdom.[1] Prior to the publication of Wodrow, it appears that there were some who *denied* this cruel act of the late Government.[2] Sir George Mackenzie, as has been shewn, did so in an *indirect* way, and others after him doubtless did the same.[3] But no one attempted to clear the Government of this charge by a direct proof. Wodrow refers to such denials, and assigns as the *reason* for giving this piece of history at greater length, that 'the advocates for the cruelty of this period, and our Jacobites, have the impudence some of them to deny,[4] and others to extenuate, this matter of fact, which can be evinced by many living witnesses.' Here a challenge was openly given *to prove the negative*, but no one in that age ventured to accept of it. No one then came forward to say, as Mr Napier now says, 'that is a calumnious fable from beginning to end,' and to prove that it was a fable by the testimony of *living witnesses*.[5] Would the adherents of the late Government have allowed a calumny to rest upon them if they had been able so easily to wipe it off?[6] Would they have missed the chance of proving a charge of wilful

[1] The *fact* of the denial being proved, Vindicator is driven to found his argument upon the assumption that the *truth* of the denial was not supported by proof. But if A avers that C was drowned, and B denies that fact, it is "morally certain" (as it is legally right), that B will not think of proving his *negative*, if A does not prove his *affirmative*.

[2] Why, Wodrow himself tells us that all the Jacobites denied it; and Vindicator says, "there were more Jacobites then than now." The more the Jacobites, the more the witnesses against the truth of Wodrow.

[3] From such thistles as these does Vindicator gather his grapes.

[4] Surely that denial was a better reason for *proving* the story than for making it longer. But that let in the "embellishments" which martyrology is always more beholden to than to proof.

[5] But if the public prosecutor of their day was one of those who denied,—no matter whether directly or indirectly,—the truth of the drowning of these public criminals, there was one important witness at any rate. And *quomodo constat* that some of the others were not living witnesses also?

[6] It will be observed that Vindicator, throughout the whole of this anxious but feeble reasoning, preserves a discreet silence as to the au-

falsehood against the Church of Scotland, and thus destroying the credibility of the history in all its other details, if they had been able to do their cause so great a service? No one can believe this. The fact that Wodrow's *challenge* was unanswered at the time, and that his statement remained *uncontradicted* for a century and a-half, is *proof of itself*—even were there no other—that the story is true."—(History Vindicated, p. 60.)

In the year 1722 "the adherents of the late Government" were scarcely in a condition to be exchanging a fire of folios with the Kirk's martyrologist-in-chief, for the purpose of cleansing that historical Augean stable, Wodrow's History of the Sufferings of the Kirk. Vindicator's argument is, that the Wigtown martyrdom, at the time of the Kirk-session's fishing for it, and Wodrow's thrusting it into his creel, was a fact universally known to be unquestionable, and therefore was never questioned. But the minister of Glasserton is a reasoner, in martyrology at least, whom it is not very easy to keep to the point, even after it has been admitted. We must remind him that Wodrow *was* contradicted. He was contradicted for some time prior to his publication in 1722; and that that contradiction was continued for years thereafter, is proved by Walker's admission of the fact, amid a storm of bad words, in 1727. It was then *for Wodrow* to prove the story thus so persistently denied; and the only way he ever proved it was, first by asserting that the story he tells "*can be* evinced by many living witnesses," and then saying, and saying falsely, that attestations by eye-witnesses were *in his hands*, which, for the best of all reasons, were never produced at the time, and have never been discovered since. On the other hand, the impugners of Wodrow and Walker were not destitute of proof, even though the important evidence of the Privy Council Record was not at that time accessible to them. There was, however, patent to all, the calm, dignified, and precise statement, published in 1691, the dying testimony it may be called, of that honourable and high minded statesman, who, at

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nihilating fact that Wodrow, after casting on the Government a whole melodrama of cruelty, himself came to "wipe it off" (but in a somewhat sly and slovenly manner), by his own unwelcome discovery that the story he had been telling them was all *bunkum*, though much too good not to be left "standing in his page of history."

the time of the martyrdom in question, was himself public prosecutor for the kingdom. Did Wodrow ever disprove his testimony? Nay, he *proved it* by that sudden discovery of his own, with which his stultified story is wound up. But what loyalist at that period of our history, when Wodrow's star was in the ascendant in Scotland, could undertake to enter as contradictor against his wilderness of calumnies, contained in those ponderous tomes, which no stomach but that of a conventicle ostrich could digest? And, as regards the Wigtown martyrdom, who cared to publish a special refutation of an *ex facie* ridiculous romance, against which Sir George Mackenzie himself had, thirty years before, furnished a most sufficient antidote? Had the author of these pages not been somewhat idly disposed, he would scarcely have set himself to refute it in this generation. But that unnatural cross between Wodrow and Macaulay was producing a monster in history,—the beautiful bust of a "maiden of eighteen," with an ugly fishy termination. So we bestowed our own energies, such as they are, to exorcise the *lusus*, and with a success which, says the minister of Glasserton, "has made some converts even in Galloway, and more perhaps elsewhere."

And why should this raise such a ferment in the salt of the Solway? Why should this cause covenanting Scotland to be up and crying—The word of the Lord and Wodrow? Is not one martyrdom *mythicised* better than a thousand *marbled?* Ever since the pre-historic period, error and falsehood have gone hand in hand with history, as inevitably as sin and sorrow accompany the steps of man. All that can be done to redeem it, and that only to a limited extent, is to winnow from time to time the chaff from the wheat. This good work should never be omitted when an opportunity occurs; and however humble the workman, or small the occasion, the effort to redeem history from the imperfections of human nature ought to be rewarded with the approbation of all who prefer truth to falsehood; for, alas! it is no less necessary that truth should be ever watching the steps of history, than that mercy should follow in the wake of war.

That every martyrdom which has stood in Wodrow's historic page not *disproved* until now, must be true, is the minis-

ter of Glasserton's postulate for the Vindication of History. It is true, not only *præsumptione juris*, but *præsumptione juris et de jure!* It cannot be disproved in 1863, because it could "easily" have been disproved (if untrue) in 1722, and was not! To this doctrine I demur. I have taken upon me to represent the parties who, between 1711 and 1727, impugned Wodrow and Walker. Under the disadvantage of the lapse of a century and a-half, I have undertaken to prove the "negative" for them now, which they did not take the trouble to prove for themselves. It is no vindication of History to struggle to bolster up, with bad evidence against good, a calumnious fable, ingrained into the history of Scotland by national peculiarities of no happy memory, upon the plea that it has become hallowed by time. If I may venture to say so, the worthy minister of Glasserton occupies in this discussion the false, but not (considering his calling and his locality) unnatural position of being more intent upon saving this miserable martyrdom to the history of the Kirk, than of saving the integrity of History herself to the world. So far does this feeling prevail, among the sect who have cherished these political canonizations into a national Institution, that they are now grasping at a mere remnant of the original story, in order to keep these Saints of the Solway under water. They are reduced to maintain that though it be proved they were *pardoned* by Government, there are indications, in certain old anonymous pamphlets belonging to Cameronian letters, of a general impression existing some eighteen years after the alleged martyrdom, that *drowned they were,* nevertheless, though for what reason, by whose power, at whose will, in what manner, at what time, or with what melodramatic "embellishments," no man, dead or alive, can tell. Hanging on by a mere shred of their disappearing martyrdom, these enthusiasts flatter themselves that they sleep on the field of battle; that the Wigtown Martyrs are saved to them in all their glory; and that a certain monument, to this mythical martyrdom, which has recently disfigured the classic neighbourhood of the "lofty brow of ancient Keir," is justified in adding *an infant* to the group of drowned, and most unfairly sending *old Maryaret* to Coventry!

But the world is indebted to "History Vindicated" for a

valuable *aphorism*, by which the "Case for the Crown" intends to benefit in the present Recapitulation. It merits to be printed in letters of gold, but capitals must here suffice:—

"WHEN A FACT IN HISTORY IS DISPUTED, THE WAY TO ARRIVE AT THE TRUTH IS TO SHEW WHO THE PERSONS WERE ON WHOSE TESTIMONY THE FACT WAS AFFIRMED, WHAT OPPORTUNITIES THEY HAD OF KNOWING THE TRUTH, AND WHAT GROUNDS THERE ARE—FROM THEIR CHARACTER, AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THEY MADE THEIR STATEMENT—FOR BELIEVING THAT THEY STATED WHAT THEY KNEW TO BE TRUTH."—(*History Vindicated*, *p.* 6.)

Vindicator will surely admit that this golden rule is as good for the detection of a falsehood as for the discovery of a fact! With what success he has applied it in support of the joint-stock-company witnessing, of those kirk-session worthies who, in the years 1710 and 1711, were ordered, by their ecclesiastical superiors, to put on high-pressure steam for the collection of "sufferings" for their martyrologist-in-chief,—'Get us *sufferings*, brethren; get us *sufferings;* honestly if you can, but get us *sufferings*,'—shall be considered afterwards. Meanwhile let us apply the invaluable rule, which Vindicator has so solemnly enunciated, to the question, Were the Jacobite impugners Wodrow talks of, justified in *their denial* of the fact of this martyrdom? Against that denial our reverend opponent has nothing better to urge—and hence he has urged it *ad nauseam*—than that they did not attempt to prove the truth of their denial. But what if it be proved for them now? What if we prove it by the testimony of a witness who fulfils, in *every particular*, the conditions of Vindicator's aphorism? Is that not just as good as if they had done it for themselves?

The *de quo queritur*, "the fact affirmed" by these impugners, is, that the two women condemned to death under Colonel Douglas's High Commission of Justiciary sitting at Wigtown in 1685, were *not* executed. In reply to the Principal of St Andrews, whose key-note of lament over "the beautiful old story" is not "a tale, alas! too true," but—a tale, alas! *not* true,—in reply, I say, to his piteous question,

"Were the two women *never at all* drowned at Wigtown?" the "impudent" impugners of Wodrow and Walker, a century and a half ago, would assuredly have answered, "No; never at all." The author of the "Case for the Crown" has fallen heir to their impudence, or is, at least, what lawyers would call a *vicious intromitter*. I undertake to prove it still. And let me ask, what witness is there "by whose testimony the fact affirmed" would be most satisfactorily proved, or more strictly in terms of the rule upon which Vindicator pretends to found? *Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh.* Why? Because he had the best "opportunity of knowing the truth." He was the great official and leading statesman of the Executive at the time. If the condemned, instead of being executed, were pardoned, not only must Sir George have known the fact, but he must have *advised* it. If that fact can be *unequivocally* gathered, in whatever form, from the King's Advocate of 1685, the weight of such evidence cannot be exaggerated. It was with regret we found it nibbled at, and even regarded as *suspect*, by such a magnate as Dr Tulloch. Sir George Mackenzie, high in mind and genius as in position, the most accomplished celebrity of his day, was, in a question of truth or falsehood, *omni suspicione major.* The time is gone by, we trust never to return, when a mind, even of the most ordinary culture, would not revolt at the old covenanting abuse of "Bloody *Mackeenie.*" Even *Cuddy* would not stand that nonsense now from *Mause.* And when the Primarius Professor of a once famous University forgot himself so far as to put in print,—"As for the *negative* evidence of Sir George Mackenzie and Lord Fountainhall, we cannot attach much importance to either. It was *Sir George's interest* to make the best case he could for the Government whose servant he had been"[1]—he thereby forfeited every pretension to the eulogy which he himself claims for his own Essay on the Wigtown Martyrs, where he says that the conclusion at which he had arrived was the result of an "enlightened historical criticism."[2]

Well, then, what grounds are there, from the *character* of

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[1] See "Case for the Crown," p. 50.

[2] See "Case for the Crown," p. 32.

Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh, for believing that he would not state what he knew to be untrue? Every ground that ever sustained the reputation for integrity of a statesman of high position, high principle, and unsullied honour. And under "what circumstances" was it that Sir George Mackenzie prepared for publication a statement that is absolutely *incompatible* with the execution of these women? It was under circumstances of academic retirement, and ebbing life, that leave not the vestige of an excuse for imputing to that great man a single motive for sullying his own integrity at the close of his life, with a meanness that never characterised it for a moment throughout its long and most trying endurance. Here, surely, is a witness,—we are not, indeed, permitted to say, after the minister of Glasserton's own heart,—but strictly in terms of his own aphorism. Let us turn, then, to the testimony of Sir George Mackenzie.

The Jacobites' Denial of the Truth of the Wigtown Martyrdom justified by the Lord Advocate, Sir George Mackenzie.

On the triumph of the Revolutionists in Scotland, Sir George Mackenzie retired to Oxford, and devoted himself to the pursuit of letters, which he had ever loved more than either law or politics. With a mind relieved of all its load, his public life honourably closed, he retired to the University of Oxford in the autumn of 1689. On the 2d of June 1690 he was formally admitted to the privileges of a student of the Bodleian. But this *otium cum dignitate* he was not destined to enjoy for a lengthened period. Having gone for a while to London, he there caught a malady, of which he died in the month of May 1691.[1]

[1] This celebrated Lord Advocate of the Stuart dynasty, great both in law and letters, was also, not inconsistently, a great dreamer. His dear friend Dundee complains to Queensberry, then at the head of affairs in Scotland, that the Advocate was apt to neglect answering important letters. In a letter (among the Buccleuch Papers), dated 1st March 1682, Claverhouse thanks Queensberry for "your Lordship's care of the public concern, and goodness to me in giving me so particular and exact

It was a graceful act in Sir George to leave behind him that noble vindication of the maligned Government he had so long served with such ability, firmness, and humanity. His own reputation with posterity he must have felt to be altogether independent of it. But among the many Cameronian calumnies sown broadcast against the Government, in anonymous pamphlets and chapman's tracts, nothing seems to have touched him more than the false accusations of malicious cruelty towards the lower classes of the lieges, especially of the weaker sex. That he was by nature a mild and humane man, and that such was his known character, is curiously illustrated even by this ridiculous fable of the Wigtown Martyrs. It seems never to have occurred to the blundering concoctors of it, that their melodrama of drowning was based, not upon *cruelty*, but upon *humanity*. To be drowned by the advancing tide, was a sentence which would allow time, to the very last, for the condemned saving themselves, by abjuring the tenets of murder and assassination. The reiterated urging of the government oath, and all that pully-hauly work in the water, as if they were bobbing for apples in the Blednoch, would indicate a contest between a humane executive and a mad martyr. Why, the "virgin martyr of eighteen" was even allowed to be *petted* in the water. "Dear Margaret, only say *God save the King*.—She *has* said it! *indeed* Sir, she has said it!"—till the "presiding officer," whom "her friends were crowding around," must have run no small risk of being thrown into the water himself. Of course this is all *nursery-tale nonsense*, as even Principal Tulloch was constrained to admit. But whence came

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returns, which others neglect to do, and *especially* my good friend the Advocate, who writes to me very kindly, but very little in return of anything I desire of him. But I know he ordinarily *loses the letters*, and *forgets the business*, before he have the time to make any return."—(*Napier's Memorials and Letters of Dundee*, vol. ii., p. 265.)

Vindicator is offended at the flood of light let in upon his own predilections by the recently discovered voluminous correspondence of Claverhouse with the head of the Government of Scotland. He says, with obvious spleen, "Claverhouse's letters to head-quarters, which Mr Napier has done the world the favour to publish, shew with what zeal he entered on his duties." These are the letters which have utterly extinguished the "beautiful old story" of the "Christian Carrier."

the idea? Just from this, that it was the characteristic of Sir George Mackenzie's administration, in all such miserable cases, to *urge* a recantation, and to offer pardon, and life, on the easiest terms, up to the very last moment.

There is nothing more remarkable in the history of these sad troubles, than the merciful and long-suffering forbearance of Government towards female agitators, who in their rebellious tantrums were sometimes more dangerous, and always more fearless, than the men. That during this struggle between established government and fanatical anarchy, female delinquents, nay, females who could not be called delinquents at all, but who, from their unobtrusive piety, their harmless gentle demeanour, their refined sentiments, their venerable age, or their interesting maidenhood, were the very treasures of rural society, and a credit to their country, had nevertheless been treated as the worst and most dangerous enemies of the State, is a gross and stupid falsehood, with which Wodrow and his prompters have debased the History of Scotland, and Lord Macaulay betrayed it. Even throughout the whole "Cloud of Witnesses,"—a vulgar collection of fanatical calumnies which no cultured mind could endure to look at twice, and which was first published by the "Society People" in 1714,—only four female martyrs are recorded. These are *Isobel Alison*, and *Marion Harvie*, who were hanged together in 1681; and the two Saint Margarets of Wigtown, who were *not* drowned in 1685. In the first instance, the very style of the gallows-blasphemy called their "dying testimonies," as recorded in the "Cloud," tends to justify the Executive. The other instance, denied to be true by Jacobite *tradition*, is utterly extinguished by Sir George Mackenzie himself, in his Vindication of the Government of Charles II.

This most temperate but spirited performance was published in London, only a few months after Sir George's death, in the usual small quarto form of the pamphlets of the day, and is entitled: "A Vindication of the Government in Scotland during the reign of King Charles II., against misrepresentations made in several scandalous pamphlets, &c.: By Sir George Mackenzie, late Lord Advocate there." It bears to have been "licensed, September 19, 1691." The sincere and praise-

worthy design of this pamphlet (consisting of 66 quarto pages) is stated with equal truth and simplicity, at the commencement. The italics occur in the original print:—

"The origin of this paper is neither to seduce others into *faction*, nor to make an *apology;* the one being too *malicious*, and the other too *mean*. But because many honest and sincere men have been abused by some late misinformations, whereby the *charity* and *unity* of *Protestants* amongst themselves are much weakened, therefore this paper comes to set things in their *true light by a bare narrative*, which will be sufficient to reclaim those who are abused, and to confute those *malicious authors* who have endeavoured to reproach a whole nation with villanies, of which none but these authors themselves could have been guilty."

Reverend Sir,—you are very sound in that aphorism of yours for the testing of historical truth, but most unsound in the practical application. You reject the best informed and least suspicious witness that could possibly be adduced against the fact of this execution, namely, Sir George Mackenzie himself, while you labour to impose upon history, as evidence not to be impugned in support of the incredible scene of your melodramatic martyrdom, anonymous pamphlets crammed with Cameronian scurrilities, the very principle of whose composition is the most inveterate calumny. "In the conduct of the rigid Covenanters," says an excellent and temperate historian of the state of the Christian Church in Scotland, "there is nothing more remarkable than their disposition to slander, and the reckless intrepidity with which they scattered around the most atrocious calumnies."[1] The whole array of your so called proofs, by "Early Pamphlets," has already been thoroughly examined, fairly weighed, and shewn to be wanting, in *Part Second* of the "Case for the Crown." It sickens one to have to recur to the literature of the Conventicles; for, reverend Sir, you just hark back upon the old slot of "Faithful Contendings," and "A Hind Let Loose," *et hoc genus omne*, as if not a word had ever been said, or could possibly be said, to damage the authority—the accuracy, respectability, or truth—of this your "Cloud of Witnesses." But since you have that reliance upon Lord Macaulay, that you prefer his version of the Wigtown martyrdom to Wodrow's own, please to remember

[1] History of the Church in Scotland, by the Rev. Michael Russell, LL.D., vol. ii. p. 264.

the character *he* has drawn of your favourite authors and principal witnesses *in nubibus*, for whom you reject such testimony, against the fact of a *public execution*, as the Lord Advocate of the day. Read, reverend Vindicator, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the following passage from Lord Macaulay's History of England. He is speaking of the authors of those works with which you profess to vindicate history.

"They wanted not only freedom of conscience for themselves, but *absolute dominion* over *the consciences* of others; not only the Presbyterian doctrine, polity, and worship, but the Covenant in its utmost rigour. Nothing would content them but that every end for which civil society exists should be sacrificed to the ascendancy of a theological system. One who condemned such acts as the murder of Cardinal Beatoun and Archbishop Sharpe, fell into the same sin for which Saul had been rejected from being King over Israel. All the rules by which, among *civilised* and *Christian* men, the horrors of war are mitigated, were *abominations in the sight of the Lord.* Quarter was to be neither taken nor given. A Malay running a-muck, a mad dog pursued by a crowd, were the models to be imitated by warriors fighting in just self-defence. To reasons such as guide the conduct of statesmen and generals, the minds of these zealots were *absolutely impervious.* That a man should venture to urge such reasons was sufficient evidence that he was not one of the faithful.

"If any person is inclined to suspect that I have exaggerated the *absurdity* and *ferocity* of these men, I would advise him to read two books that will convince him that I have rather softened than overcharged the picture,—the '*Hind Let Loose*,' and '*Faithful Contendings Displayed.*'"[1]

Is it to be wondered at if *veracity* be never found to accompany the "absurdity and ferocity of these men?" Yet they are the very buttresses of your "History Vindicated." Amid the sounding brass and tinkling cymbal, wherewith a clerical brother (who would seem to be your armour-bearer) clamorously demands, for your vindication of history, that public attention which you might well fear would not be attracted to this dispute, enforces the weakness of your arguments, and inflates the fanaticism of your proofs,—until that excellent newspaper, the *Scotsman*, reads like a paper of "the Society People," and gives out such odour of sanctity as belongs to a Shields, a Cargill, and a Renwick,—we only hear the old chimes. The whole argument, the whole evidence,

[1] Lord Macaulay's History of England, vol. ii. pp. 132-33, *and note.*

consists in magnifying the self-same old mother-moth of calumny, the one original falsehood about the "drowning of women," first propagated by Alexander Shields, with the most audacious disregard of truth, and then passed from hand to hand of these unscrupulous revilers of constituted authority, and defilers of their country's annals.[1] Arguing upon such crumbs of martyrological comfort, as you can cull out of the lucubrations of this fanatic, you say, "though this pamphlet was a manifesto of the Society People, it was written by Alexander Shields, and Mr Napier endeavours to break its force by *heaping abuse* upon Shields' character." Nay, reverend Sir, pronounce of myself what you please, but as you are a Christian minister, for heaven's sake don't stand up, or seem to stand up, for the character of Alexander Shields. Don't stand up for the truth or Christian spirit of the man who execrates the murdered Prelate of St Andrews, in such terms as these,—"A villain, a sorcerer, a murderer, and a beast of prey;" and who thus sings his diabolical *halleluja* over the most cowardly murder that was ever prompted by the Prince of liars on this blood-stained earth since Abel fell by the hand of his brother.

"That truculent traitor James Sharp, the Arch-Prelate, &c., received the *just demerit* of his perfidy, apostacy, sorceries, villanies, and murders,—sharp arrows of the mighty, and coals of juniper. For, upon the 3d of May 1679, several *worthy gentlemen*, with some other men of *courage* and *zeal for the cause of God*, and *the good of the country*, executed *righteous judgment* upon him, in Magus Muir, near St Andrews."[2]

Let my "logic be freely examined," if you please, but don't rebuke me for "*heaping abuse* upon Shields' character," because, in reference to the truculent passage quoted above, I have said, and truly said, and say again, that it was "by this railing Rabshakeh of the Conventicles that the unmitigated falsehood of the *drowning of women* by the Government of the Restoration is first promulgated."[3] Has your anxiety to save this silly martyrdom to the Kirk so far demoralized your better judg-

[1] See "Case for the Crown," pp. 82-87.

[2] Shields' "Hind Let Loose." For a detailed account of this scoundrel, and illustrations of his cowardly as well as truculent nature, see "Case for the Crown," Part Second, pp. 75-87.

[3] "Case for the Crown," pp. 79, 80.

ment as to take offence at the sentiment I have expressed regarding that railer's glorification of the murder on Magus Moor? I ventured, at the close of the "Case for the Crown," to parody Wordsworth's sonnet on the Covenanters. I repeat it here, Vindicator, that you may commit it to heart.

When Magus Moor sent forth a suppliant cry,
A daughter's writhing form was interposed;
But the sword stay'd not: the fell caitiffs closed,
And the Kirk kept her ancient cruelty.
How little boots that fair girl's fortitude,
Wounded and trod on, thou canst testify,
For Scotland's shame, O Magus Moor! where blood,
And scatter'd brains, invoke the vengeful sky
To launch its lightenings on the Covenant.
Foul murder! done by those who dare to draw,
Even from the Book of Life, intolerant
Death-warrants! Bishops bleed by Hell's lynch-law;
But who would slay the Church, tilts with a straw
Against a champion cased in adamant.

You are a purist in "style," reverend Sir. How like you our "abuse" in verse? "Dost thou think because *thou* art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale? Yes, by Saint Anne, and ginger shall be hot i' the mouth too." But I don't mean to be so hard upon yourself as to believe that you really *approve* of the canonization of this venomous author of the "Society People's" tracts. Nor do I mean to say that you really enjoy his anathema against the murdered Prelate. You only object to my calling him names because it *breaks the force* of his testimony, for the absolute truth of which your case compels you to insist. "It is not necessary to this argument," you say, "in which we are dealing merely with *the facts* of the case, to shew that Shields was either *a wise* or *a good man*, or that he wrote in polished terms, and in a *Christian spirit:* The pamphlet in question was adopted by a considerable section of the people,"—the Society People, to wit!—"and published by them as *their* memorial of sufferings and grievances." Of course. It was concocted for them. Does that enhance the truth of the testimony? Out of very charity, reverend Vindicator, I interpret what you have said of Shields to mean no vindication of *him.* Out of very charity I read you to say that Shields was neither a *wise man*, nor a

good man, and that neither was he a man of a *Christian spirit*. But did he not profess to be a Heaven-sent minister of the gospel—a shining light? Has the character which you admit of him, no effect upon his assumption of an inspired mission, or the value of his testimony? Have you nothing to do with that, because you "are dealing merely with *the facts* of the case?" Is that *your* logic?

And what is all this outcry—all this cant—with which I have been so often assailed in no measured terms, about discussing calumny with calmness. I am not writing a history; I am exposing calumnious falsehoods for the benefit of history. The first hand that seizes a murderous Fenian is not expected to be calm and dispassionate; the Judge, who condemns him, is. But must the heel be pressed lightly on the head of a calumny for fear of giving it a headache? Must we not tread on the toe of a calumny, in case it have the gout? Are the tender corns of a calumnious falsehood to be respected because its mother was a Covenanter? Go to. Is energy intemperance? Is the natural expression of a just indignation to be *identified* with the virulent and truculent froth of a Shields? Nay, was Lord Macaulay calm when he denounced "the absurdity and ferocity of these men"? Or when that great historian recorded a character of Viscount Dundee, which has been proved as false as his character of the rigid Covenanters has been proved to be true, did you, reverend Sir, ever dream of criticising him for "heaping abuse"?

And speaking of that, Vindicator, your armour-bearer or herald, in the *Scotsman*, has been anything but civil to myself. Because I have dared to recognise *humanity* in a *humane act* of the Government as regards the trial and condemnation of female rebels, he likens me to "a Mexican official under Juarez"! Upon my faith he does, Glasserton. I had directed attention to that extreme anxiety of the Government to avoid even *trying* women, or, at all events, *hanging* them, which is made so manifest by these their peremptory instructions to the High Commission of Justiciary in 1685:—

"2*do*. If any person *own* the principles [of Renwick's murderous proclamation], or *do not disown them*, they must be *judged, at least, by three*. And you must immediately give them *a libel*, and the *names of the in-*

quest and witnesses; and they, being found guilty, are to be hanged immediately in the place, according to law. But at this time *you are not to examine any women*, but such as have been *active in the said courses in a signal manner*,—and those are to be *drowned.*"

These most particular instructions were issued for the direction, among others, of the very Commission under which the two Wigtown women were tried and condemned; nor can there be any rational doubt that they were dictated by humane feelings, and the most moderate spirit of criminal justice. But, reverend Sir, that alarming *Scutifer* of yours in the *Scotsman*, bristling and glowing all over with "sharp arrows of the mighty, and coals of juniper," points me out (by a cautiously inverted figure of speech), as a savage official, scarcely fitted to occupy the provincial judgment seat with which Her Majesty has intrusted me. Speaking of that humane instruction, and quoting in most conspicuous italics my view of it, he thus pronounces:—"This instruction, Mr Napier,—who is not a Mexican official under Juarez, but an advocate of the Scotch bar, the Sheriff of one of our Scotch counties, and living in Edinburgh in the year of grace 1863,—calls one, '*not of barbarous cruelty, but of careful criminal justice; and, as regards women, in spirit and intention as humane as the condition of the country could possibly admit of.*'" Am I covered with confusion as well as italics? Seriously, Vindicator, have I reason to apprehend that, in consequence of this commentary of mine, I may be mistaken in Dumfriess-shire for a "Mexican official under Juarez"? But let us return to Sir George Mackenzie's vindication of the Government,—a more valuable vindication of history than is likely ever to emanate from the Solway.

The case of Marion Harvey *and* Isobel Alison, *recorded by the Lord Advocate as the only female State convicts who suffered death throughout the whole course of the reigns of the Restoration.*

It must be kept in mind that when Sir George Mackenzie wrote his Vindication, the fabulous *story* of the Wigtown

Martyrs did not exist in any one of its various forms. No *details* of that extraordinary event ever appeared, even in the most obscure print, until between twenty and thirty years after that Lord Advocate's death. In his time nothing had occurred to lead him into such a Wigtown war as is raging now. His was not a controversial pamphlet in reply to the fable of the Wigtown Martyrs. As he tells us himself, his object was to give a succinct narrative—a bare statement of the truth, intended to meet, in terms more or less general, "the many dreadful lies," to use his own expressions, with which the Government had been assailed by those firebrands, and mendacious scribes of the "Society People," Renwick and Shields, "in several scandalous pamphlets." No female rebel had suffered a capital punishment since the beginning of the year 1681, in the reign of Charles II., when *Marion Harvey* and *Isobel Alison* were executed together at Edinburgh for high treason. They were hanged in the Grassmarket, and enacted on the scaffold a most outrageous scene of blasphemous abuse, especially against the Sovereign, which has been recorded as a "dying testimony" of their allegiance to Jesus Christ, by the very preachers who excited these poor ignorant women to their doom, and threw them into a frame of mind that rendered them no less unfit to die than to live.[1] The horror and scandal of this exhibition, which the benevolent and judicious Lord Advocate did his utmost to avoid, raised great doubts in the mind of the executive whether such examples as these were not calculated to do more harm than good. With regard to the justice of this execution, there could be no manner of doubt. They were indicted chiefly for complicity in the murder of the Archbishop. Their stormy treason at the bar, *coram publico,* rendered it unnecessary for the public prosecutor to lead evidence of the main charge against them, that

[1] Claverhouse, writing to Queensberry, April 17, 1682, says,—"Did the King and the Duke know what these rebellious villians they call *ministers* put in the heads of the people, they would think it necessary to keep them out. The poor people about Minnigaff confess, *upon oath*, that they were made renew the Covenant, and believe the King was a Papist, and that he designed to force it on them."—*See Memorials of Dundee*, ii. 275.

they had for many months harboured and concealed the Magus Moor murderers. In the Records of the High Court of Justiciary we find the mode of their pleading guilty, or rather of glorying in their guilt:—

"Marjory Harvie adheres to the fourth article of the new covenant, the same being read over to her, and disowns the King and his authority, and the authority of the Lords of Justiciary, and adheres and abides at the treasonable declaration emitted at Sanquhar, and approves of the same, and says it was *lawful to kill the Archbishop of St Andrews*, when the Lord raised up instruments to that effect; and that he was as miserable and perjured a wretch as ever betrayed the Kirk of Scotland. Declares that *ministers* [curates] brought them up to that principle; and now they have left them, and that she has heard Mr John Welsh and Master Riddell *preach up these principles she now owns*,—and blesses God she ever heard them preach, for *her soul has been refreshed by them*,—she approves of Mr Cargill's *excommunicating the King*. Declares she can write, but refuses to sign the same." [1]

These two unfortunates were the only females executed for high treason throughout the whole course of both reigns of the Restoration. The Lord-Advocate, who conducted that unpleasant trial in person, tells us so himself, expressly and emphatically. Before quoting the words of his Vindication, however, it will serve to illustrate them, if we further premise what was noted of these criminals at the time, by one who was of counsel for them.

Sir John Lauder of Fountainhall, the great Whig lawyer, who constantly gave his best counsel, both in prison and pleading for them at the bar, to all the wretched victims of these destructive firebrand preachers, has left in his several diaries a particular account of the fate and character of these two females. As their desperate conduct at the bar had superseded proof, they came to suffer death in consequence not of any overt act of treason proved against them, but of public treasonable *utterances*, of the most violent and dangerous character, both in open court, and afterwards on the scaffold, where their lives were offered them if they would retract.

[1] Records of the High Court of Justiciary. The declaration, which appears to have been the plea for both prisoners, is signed by the Lord Justice-Clerk and three Lords of Justiciary, 17th January 1681. But they delay pronouncing sentence until the 21st, doubtless to give the women time to retract their treason.

Fountainhall, while doubting the policy of such examples, fairly admits the difficulty of the case, and the impracticable nature of these two female convicts. He thus records their fate:—

"26*th February* 1681.—There were hanged at Edinburgh two women of ordinary rank, for their *uttering treasonable words*, and *other principles and opinions*, contrary to all our Government. The one was called Janet [*Isobell*] Alison, a Perth woman, the other [*Marion*] Harvie, from Bor rowstounness. They were of *Cameron's* faction; bigots, and *sworn enemies to the King and Bishops;* of the *same stamp* with Rathillet, Skene, and Potter."

Now, these men, as already stated in the "Case for the Crown," were the most truculent of the sect, and fit for nothing but the gallows. Rathillet was ringleader in the murder of the Primate. Fountainhall, with all his whiggism, had more sense and candour than to record these women as saints and martyrs. But the Whig lawyer expresses a doubt as to the policy of deducing high treason from *words*, however outrageous in their treasonable character, and wherever uttered, without *overt acts*. Moreover, he doubts the executive policy of honouring *any female* delinquent of the kind with *martyrdom*. Referring to another of his own note-books, for a fuller discussion of that question, he thus continues his remarks on the case of these two women:—

"We debate [elsewhere] how far *men*—for *women* are scarce to be *honoured* with that martyrdom, *as they call it*—are to be punished *capitally* for their bare perverse judgments, without *actings*. Some thought the *threatening to drown them privately in the North Loch*,[1] without giving them the credit of a *public* suffering, would have more effectually reclaimed them than any arguments which were used; and the bringing them to a *scaffold* but disseminates the infection. *However*, these women proved *very obstinate*, and, *for all the pains taken*, would not once acknowledge the King to be their lawful Prince, but called him *a perjured bloody man*. At *the staye* [scaffold] they told, so long as they followed and heard the *curates*, they were *swearers*, *Sabbath-breakers*, and with *much aversion* read the Scriptures; but found much joy upon their spirit since they followed the *conventicle preachers*."

And so they got hanged. This casts some light upon the

[1] Now Princes Street gardens and railway. Of course Fountainhall here refers to *women*, to whom, for humanity and decency's sake, that mode of capital punishment was often applied in the olden times.

oft repeated calumnious cant of "drowning of women,"—who *were never drowned.* The author of these pages need scarcely fear being mistaken for a "Mexican official of Juarez," because he discovered *humanity* in the order that female convicts were to be condemned to be drowned, not hanged. Fountainhall understood it so. Nay, he tells us that the idea was mooted, that the mere prospect, or "threatening," of being drowned without the *eclat* of any fanatical display, might induce them to say, "God save the King," and live. The very next females under sentence for high treason were the Wigtown martyrs. No record either of their trial or sentence can be found. But there is sufficient evidence that they were condemned to die at Wigtown for obstinately refusing to take the *Abjuration Oath,* and that under a High Commission of Justiciary whose orders were not to try women at all if they could avoid it; and if driven to condemn them capitally, the sentence was to be *drowning.* But they were not drowned forthwith. It is well worthy of remark, how this "cruel and bloody" Commission were disposed to deal with such women. Their orders as regards male convicts were, that those "are to be hanged immediately on the place, according to law." Doubtless this did not mean to exclude all discretionary power on the part of the High Commission. But, be this as it may, there is no such express order as regards the women. Although no record of Court is known to exist, there is evidence that these Wigtown women, who received their sentence at Wigtown on the 13th day of April 1685, were consigned to the prison there, but were still alive, and confined in the burgh prison of *Edinburgh,* on the *last day* of that same month of April. They had a *long day* granted them. Nor is it at all improbable, that that date "11th May 1685," so precisely given as the day of the drowning, was the date to which that sentence had been deferred which was never executed.

And now, Reverend Vindicator, a word with yourself. That a case like the one with which you propose to vindicate history, should compel you to argue weakly, is not surprising. But you argue most inconsistently. There are some passages in your pamphlet I must here pause to answer in detail,

before returning to the Lord-Advocate's "Vindication." You say:—

1. "Mr Napier gives credit to the Royal Commissioners for their clemency, inasmuch as the 'women were not ordered for immediate execution on the place, as the instructions of the Privy Council *warranted*'—he should have said '*required*.'"—(P. 20.)

I should have said no such thing. I used the right word. They were not *required* to drown "immediately on the place," as regarded women. And even the order to execute male convicts with such promptitude was not considered absolutely imperative, for some men who were condemned to death under that very Justiciary Commission were sent to Edinburgh, and there reprieved, and pardoned.[1]

2. "Very likely the Commissioners were annoyed by the 'obstinacy' of their female criminals who would not take their oath, thus rendering a sentence of death a necessity, unless *this famous law against women* was to become at once null and void."—(P. 20.)

Nay, Vindicator, don't pervert history while vindicating it. To what "famous law against women" do you refer? Was it a law against *women* that hanged the two in Edinburgh? Was it not the law of the land? And as for this High Commission, the law of it was altogether *in favour of women*, as I have already shewn.

3. "It is easy to conceive, without ascribing to the Commissioners much wisdom or much clemency, that they must have seen that it would be well if the execution of their sentence could be *dispensed with*."—(P. 20.)

What! Is it not much clemency to dispense with the execution of a sentence of death, for high treason, under a Commission of Justiciary? You admit, however, that such clemency did characterise the proceedings of these Commissioners. Now, according to Lord Macaulay, the women were carried, immediately after condemnation, to the place of execution, and there drowned. He suggests no such ideas of clemency, and backwardness to drown, as you do. And who were the leading Commissioners? Colonel Douglas, the brother of the dreadful Queensberry; David Grahame, Sheriff-substitute of Wigtownshire, brother of the dreadful Claverhouse; the dreadful Sir

[1] See "Case for the Crown," p. 38.

Robert Grierson of Lagg. Referring to this very Commission, the reverend author of "Ladies of the Covenant" speaks of "the brutality of their judges." This is the character hitherto invariably assigned by fanatical writers to the distinguished members of this Commission. "Oh, cruel was the captain, and cruel was the crew!" But you, I think for the first time in the history of Scotch martyrology, regard the terrible members of that royal Commission as inclined to clemency. You say that their clemency went so far as to embolden them to *disobey* a peremptory law of the Commission, enjoined by the Privy Council. The Government were the cruel parties, and the Commissioners the merciful. You say,—

4. "It is no wonder that the Commissioners hesitated to carry out a sentence which they could not but see would bring odium upon their cause, and that they *departed from their instructions* so far as not to order them for immediate execution, doubtless hoping that they would be brought to comply with the terms of the Government, and petition for a reversal of their sentence."

Why, this is the very thing that happened! You also say, "The Royal Commissioners *transgressed their instructions* by not carrying out their sentence immediately at the place."—(P. 24.) But what followed? I give it in your own words. "There is *no doubt*, that the petitions in favour of the two women obtained for them on the 30th April a *reprieve by the Privy Council.*" Now, Wodrow himself, in the startling conclusion with which he stultifies his grand oratorio performed in the waters of the Blednoch, admits that reprieve to be "a *material pardon.*" Poor Wodrow, utterly bamboozled by his own most unwelcome discovery, the full terms of which he was afraid to disclose, but still determined not to lose hold either of the cruelty or the suffering, with desperate incoherence transfers the whole accusation to "the people at Wigtown"! And pray, who might they be? You say (p. 23), "he means those who *acted for the Government there.*" Principal Tulloch, in more ambitious language, but not a whit more knowledge, and a little more absurdity, pronounces,—"It was not the *regular* act of the Government—the fact of the reprieve must be allowed so far in *exoneration*—but a *high-handed outrage by its provincial agents*"! Then, pray, who were these

outrageous provincials, whose gory hands were higher and heavier than the hands of the Privy Council? The terrible Royal Commissioners were merciful. The ruthless Government were forgiving. Who were the "high-handed" murderers?

> "The actors of this cruel crime
> Was *Lagg*, *Strachan*, *Winram*, and *Grahame*,
> Neither young years, nor yet old age
> Could stop the fury of their rage."

So tells us, somewhat more explicitly than either the Principal of St Andrews or the minister of Glasserton, an old stone in the kirkyard of Wigtown, described by the former as "A memorial in the churchyard of Wigtown, as old as 1714, commemorating the drowned martyrs,"—and doubtless carved by "Old Mortality." Now, *Lagg, Strachan*, and *Grahame*, were three of the very *Royal Commissioners* who condemned the two women to death, but desired to spare them! *Winram*, was captain-lieutenant of the royal horse, commanding the detachment appointed to guard the High Commission, and acting under the orders of the Commander-in-chief of the Government forces! So, these Royal Commissioners, having, in the first instance, "transgressed their instructions," by exercising "clemency," to enable the poor women to petition for their lives,—and the cruel Government having excused the merciful transgression of the High Commission, and pardoned the treasonable transgression of the disorderly women, three of these same merciful Commissioners, with *the King's captain-lieutenant* "at their head,"—as Principal Tulloch has it—*assembled again* at Wigtown to *redeem* their wonted character for "*official brutalities* that had made the Restoration Government odious throughout Scotland,"—(the language, and the history, are Dr Tulloch's),—and, with the aid of the King's troops, "carried out the sentence, *notwithstanding the reprieve*"! The force of nonsense could no further go.

The Lord Advocate's own Statement as to the Drowning of Women.

In his Vindication of the Government, Sir George Mackenzie meets that audacious calumny, of the "drowning of women,"

with the following distinct statement, little dreaming what a *luxe of lying* on the subject—if my style were as pure as the Principal's, I might call it "embellishments"—was, in the next century, to grow out of the poisonous root of Alexander Shields. It may be necessary to state, that the italics, occurring in the passage I am about to quote, are so printed in the original publication.

"There were, indeed, two women executed, and *but two in* both these reigns, and they were punished for most heinous crimes which no sex should defend. Their crimes were, that they had recepted, and entertained, for many months together, *the murtherers of the Archbishop of St Andrews*, who were likewise *condemned traitors* for having been openly in rebellion at *Bothwell Bridge;* whereupon they having been prosecuted, declined the King's authority, *as being an enemy to God and the Devil's vicegerent.* And though a pardon was offered to them upon their repentance, they were so far from accepting it, that they owned the crimes to be duties; and our accusers should remember that these women were executed for higher crimes than the following Montrose's camp, for which *fourscore women and children* were drowned, being all in one day thrown over the bridge at *Linlithgow* by the Covenanters, and six more at *Elgin* by the same faction, all without sentence, or the least formality in law." —(*Vindication of the Government, p.* 20.)

Sir George Mackenzie had not thought it necessary to name these two women. But the account which he gives of their indictment and behaviour, compared with the record of the proceedings against them in the books of the High Court of Justiciary, and also with Fountainhall's notes, identifies the case beyond all question as the notorious one of *Isobel Alison* and *Marion Harvey.*[1]

A correspondent of the *Scotsman* newspaper (24th August 1867), who signs his communication with the initials T. L., exults greatly in the discovery of two *mares' nests,* the first of which I shall dispose of afterwards; the second I must handle now, as it relates to the very conclusive evidence afforded by Sir George Mackenzie's Vindication. T. L. seems to belong rather to the tinkling cymbal than the sounding brass of the Glasserton Orchestra; but he has the merit of having roused a second very noisy overture in the martyr-ridden *Scotsman.* This correspondent thus contributes his quota of proof to "History Vindicated," making his punctuation suit his theory.

[1] See "Case for the Crown," p. 49.

"I think that Mr Napier's opponents have too readily accepted his interpretation of the words of Sir George Mackenzie, on which so much of his case depends—"*there were indeed two women executed, and but two, in both these reigns.*" Our language was not written with such scrupulous accuracy in 1691 as it was a generation later, and the King's advocate may have meant that two women were executed, and but two, *in each of both* these reigns—Isobel Alison and Marion Harvey in that of Charles; Margaret Lauchlison and Margaret Wilson in that of James. The words, thus understood, coincide so exactly with what has hitherto been received as historical fact, and *so fully clear Sir George from the suspicion of untruthfulness*, that both sides may agree to accept this as his meaning, however *ill-expressed.*—I am, &c. T. L."

Is there any intelligent reader who will not smile at the self-satisfaction of this wiseacre, who, setting out with the ridiculous proposition that the character of Sir George Mackenzie requires to be cleared "from the suspicion of untruthfulness," pretends to think that he has succeeded in doing so, and in a manner "that both sides may agree to accept,"—by saddling him with bad grammar?

Our pundit attempts to persuade the public, that, although by all the rules of good grammar, only *two* women are declared by Sir George Mackenzie to have been executed during the period of which he speaks, he nevertheless meant *four*, by a rule of bad grammar which this tinkling cymbal of the Glasserton orchestra in the *Scotsman* ascribes to a gentleman the most accomplished in letters of his day. And from these extraordinary and unwarrantable premises T. L. is prepared at once to jump to the much coveted conclusion, that, although the Wigtown women were actually pardoned,—"drowned they were," nevertheless! Probably this critic was not aware that Dryden himself pronounced Sir George Mackenzie to be a master of good English, and is known to have declared that he, the great poet, had his first lesson "in the beautiful turn of words and thoughts, in a conversation which I had with that noble wit of Scotland, Sir George Mackenzie." Can "but two in both" mean anything else than but two in both? Moreover, although the Lord Advocate does not actually name the two convicts in his Vindication, the details he affords of their case can apply to one and the same case only, and not to two cases of totally different characteristics, the one occurring in 1681, and the other in 1685. These characteristics, too, in every particular, identify

the case with that of *Marion Harvey* and *Isobel Alison*, which the Advocate conducted in person, and have no application whatever to the circumstances of the case of the Wigtown convicts, whose pardon he himself must have advised, as he sat at the board that recorded it. Manifestly that absurd story of their drowning had never reached his ears.

It was unnecessary, perhaps, to bestow so many observations upon the commentary of T. L., which might well have been written by that histrionic favourite *Tony Lumkin*, whose intelligence this critic appears to have adopted, as well as his initials.

Tony may go down; but let him be re-inclosed.

Upon this most conclusive testimony afforded by the Lord Advocate, Dr Tulloch, misled by his predilections, has favoured us with a commentary at once crude and inconsistent. One while he insinuates that the ex-Lord Advocate had, for obvious reasons, disingenuously suppressed the notorious fact of the Wigtown tragedy! The next, he suggests that the notorious fact had never become known to him! "As to the *negative* evidence of Sir G. Mackenzie, and Lord Fountainhall," he says,—"We cannot attach much importance to either: It was Sir George's interest to make the best case he could for the Government whose servant he had been: It is perfectly possible that the Wigtown martyrdom may have happened while he never heard of it: The same remark applies to Lord Fountainhall." It is indeed perfectly possible that neither Sir George, nor Fountainhall, ever heard of the Wigtown martyrdom,—in point of fact they never did, for it never occurred. But on the supposition that Wodrow's water oratorio was really performed, it is *perfectly impossible* that such public men as these, intimately, officially, and professionally connected with all transactions of that nature in Scotland, and both of whom survived the event for many years, should never have heard of a drowning scene as public, and as tragically dramatic, as the burning of Ridley and Latimer in England, and which must have stirred Scotland to its heart's core. Had the Primarius Professor of St Andrews not plunged into this arena—this delusive quicksand of the Solway—with a mind altogether un-

ripe on the subject, he never could have come to such a conclusion. He may be quite right in his oracular estimate of myself, when he says,—"But of one thing we feel confident, that arguments, and researches, such as Mr Napier's, are not likely to settle this, or any historical difficulty." Nevertheless, this species of criticism naturally suggests the question, how high are we to estimate the weight of his own arguments, and the accuracy of his own researches, when, in relation to such an inquiry, as whether two women were publicly executed as State convicts in 1685, or not, we find him thus pooh-poohing such *positive* evidence as that afforded by the Lord Advocate of the day, combined with such *negative* evidence as we derive from the silence of so industrious a chronicler of *causes célèbres* as the great Whig lawyer, who was so often of counsel for such misguided criminals? Moreover, Dr Tulloch mistakes the nature of the evidence, as well as the value of it. Sir George Mackenzie *positively* affirms that, throughout the whole course of the two reigns of the Restoration, only two such female convicts suffered the extreme penalty of the law, and these he points out, by unmistakeable characteristics, to be *Marion Harvey* and *Isobel Alison*, who suffered in 1681, during the reign of Charles II. Now, this indeed is evidence that *Margaret Lauchlison*, and *Margaret Wilson*, did *not* suffer in 1685, during the reign of James II.; but, moreover, it is *positive* evidence. It is positive evidence of that negative. The learned Professor had confused the idea of positive evidence of a negative, with negative evidence.

But is there any man of ordinary reading, or literary intelligence, taking time and trouble to inform and clear his mind on the subject, and to reflect, who would hesitate in pronouncing that such evidence, recorded almost in his dying hour by Sir George Mackenzie, must outweigh the vague calumny emanating from such a source as virulent Cameronian tracts anonymously printed in support of the Orange invasion? Our "Case for the Crown" rests upon proof far more substantial than mere statements contained in any controversial pamphlet. But, reverend Vindicator, you must not suppose that you enjoy a monopoly of that species of evidence which forms the staple of your "History Vindicated." Such light as is thrown upon

the question by "early pamphlets" is very far indeed from being favourable to you. Sir George Mackenzie's Vindication in one scale, and every Cameronian tract you quote thrown into the other,—the latter must kick the beam. That single pamphlet by the Lord Advocate is powerful to destroy every "scurrilous pamphlet" ever issued by the "Society People." Even, reverend Sir, even as the rod of Aaron swallowed up every rod cast down before him by the sorcerers of Egypt,—it devours them all.

Because I have shewn that the Lord Advocate of the day is corroborated in every direction, by evidence positive and negative, public and private, you twit me, Vindicator, with the fact, that I consider that "Sir George Mackenzie's statement needs corroboration." And so it does, with a martyrologist so blue that were these women to rise from the dead to tell us they were never drowned at all, at all—he would still demand corroboration. You shall have enough of it.

How Sir George Mackenzie is corroborated.

1. Corroborated by the Cameronian Pamphleteer who professed to answer him.

Sir George Mackenzie's pamphlet was immediately answered, anonymously, by a bitter Cameronian, who tacitly admitted the whole of his statement about the execution of women. This fact I had sufficiently urged against Dr Tulloch in the "Case for the Crown."[1] Our present reverend opponent passes it over in total silence. I am constrained, therefore, to repeat myself in this Recapitulation, as the corroboration is of importance.

The year following that in which Sir George's pamphlet was published, there was "printed for Edward Golding, 1692," in London, an anonymous pamphlet of thirty quarto pages, entitled, "A Vindication of the Presbyterians in Scotland, from the *malicious aspersions* cast upon them in a late pamphlet written by Sir George Mackenzie, late Lord Advocate there,

[1] See "Case for the Crown," p. 53.

entitled a Vindication of the Government in Scotland, during the reign of Charles II. &c. *By a Lover of Truth.*" This irate reply professes to furnish a specific answer to every defensive statement in Sir George's Vindication. On the margin of each particular answer, there is noted the exact page of the loyal Vindication that is being handled. Sir George's statement in question occurs on p. 20 of his pamphlet; and the number of that page is printed on the margin of his opponent's pamphlet, in dealing with a matter of minor importance which that contains. But to the very conspicuous and telling statement, relating to the paucity of female executions during the reigns of the Restoration, and to the *drowning of eighty-six women and children by the Covenanters* in 1646, "A Lover of Truth" *makes no reply whatever*, even when dealing with, and noting, the *very page* of Sir George's "Vindication" in which it occurs. That most important passage, his bitter opponent entirely eschews. Nor is this a mere omission of the subject. In another page of his answer, the Cameronian introduces their usual stereotyped calumny of "cruelty to women," in these words:—

"Nay, 'tis sufficiently known that *women* were not exempted from their cruelty—persons, one would think, that could never, either by their policy or their strength, undermine the Government—and *a sex* that might have expected at least some protection from *such a Prince as King Charles II. was*—but were imprisoned, fined, and *some of them executed.*"

Could there be a more decided corroboration of Sir George Mackenzie than this? The Cameronian's accusation is precisely what Sir George himself had so emphatically stated. Nay, so completely does the pampleteer, who professes to answer it, corroborate that important item of the Vindication, that we find him taunting the Merry Monarch, in reference to his sexual propensities, with the execution during *his* reign, of the two women Isobel Alison and Marion Harvey, while he has not a word to say, on the subject of the execution of women, against his more deeply hated successor, in whose reign it was that these Wigtown women are said to have suffered, and under circumstances of the most exciting notoriety. And this omission occurs in 1692, only seven years after that marvellous martyrdom which, as recorded by Sir Andrew Agnew, caused

physical deformities to crop out, from generation to generation, in the race of some of the executioners, as a hereditary curse! Nor will it do to say that Sir George Mackenzie was only vindicating the Government of Charles II. He states, distinctly and emphatically, that the simultaneous execution of the two women to whom he refers, in that monarch's reign, was the only execution of the kind that occurred throughout the whole course of *both reigns*. Where is the answer to that? Had this Cameronian never heard of the Wigtown Martyrs? Where was tradition then? What were the eye-witnesses about? Could the only female martyrdom that sanctifies the year of grace and grief 1685, have been less known to this Cameronian in 1692, than it was to the kirk-sessions of Kirkinner and Penninghame in 1710 and 1711? Or was it less thought of then? Or was it that the ex-Lord Advocate's contradictor in 1692 was less disposed to peach against the last of the Stuarts, and his Government, than they who so violently arraigned them on this very count, in the succeeding century?

But let us come still closer to the alleged date of this martyrdom.

2. Sir George Mackenzie corroborated by "Dainty Davie."

The Covenanting system in Scotland, of collecting "grievances," and "sufferings,"—the truthless statistics of revolutionary fanaticism, the meanest school of political morality, the most equivocal phase of religious feeling,—originated in the advent of the Orange dynasty. Two of its greatest promoters in Holland were the refugees, Alexander Shields, and Gilbert Burnet. Some thirty years afterwards, that system found a fitting historian in Wodrow.

Amid the vast wilderness of his gatherings of MSS., preserved in the Advocates' Library, the original drafts of such statistics, in all shapes and sizes, are to be found by those who do not scunner at the task of groping among his mouldy folios.

Inter alia, we find the contingent furnished by that celebrated Don Juan of the Covenant, Mass David Williamson. This morsel of spite is indexed, by the hand of Wodrow himself,—"Account of the Sufferings from 1660 to 1688: *Mr D.*

Williamson." The Scotch Song of "Dainty Davie," the words of which, says Sir Walter Scott, "are rather more facetious than delicate," is founded upon a notorious scandal connected with one of his marriages, which, as I am not writing a scandalous chronicle, shall not be detailed here. But what says "Dainty Davie" on the subject of cruelty to women between the years 1660 and 1688? Here is the passage from the manuscript Wodrow had preserved:—

"Several sick women were haled to these courts by rude soldiours, for not hearing the conformists; some whereof died within few days after they were put in prisone: As *Agnes Livistoun* in Kipen parioch. The ministers were imprisoned, and some of them banished, for refusing to give in bond and caution not to preach within the Kingdom. Commissions are granted to souldiours, and others, as Captain Metland, and Mr Ezekiel Montgomery, to summond all the countrey before them, and to putt them to their oath, to answer all questions they should propose. Of some they did expiscat matter of accusatione, for which they did endyte, and put them to death; as, whether they thought Bothwell a rebellion? the killing of the Archbishope of St Andrews murther? Yea, women were not spared, as witness *two women executed at Edinburgh.*"[1]

No other instance is furnished by this informer. Is not this an exact corroboration of Sir George Mackenzie? Here we have one of the keenest and most unscrupulous apostles of the covenant, raking together all he could find against the Government, and writing up to the year 1688, yet unable to name any instance of women undergoing the punishment of death for high treason, except "two women executed *at Edinburgh.*" Who were these? Certainly not the *Wigtown* martyrs. Manifestly he means *Isobel Alison* and *Marion Harvey,* executed at Edinburgh, in 1681, as the Lord Advocate himself records in his Vindication. Is it possible, that this firebrand preacher, who knew all about the Edinburgh martyrdom, might never have heard of the Wigtown one? Is it conceivable, that if he had ever heard of that drowning scene, he would have omitted to record it in that collection of his, to bear witness against the cruelty to women, under the Government of James II., as he used the former to bear witness against the reign of Charles II.? Principal Tulloch, in order to account for the Lord Advocate's silence on the subject, calls to his aid an alternative: *Either,*

[1] Wodrow MSS., vol. xl., *folio.*

Sir George felt it to be his "interest to make the best case he could for the Government whose servant he had been,"—*or*—"it is perfectly possible the Wigtown martyrdom may have happened while he never heard of it." Will the Primarius Professor venture to apply this alternative to solve the problem of the silence of "Dainty Davie?"[1]

3. Sir George Mackenzie corroborated by Representation of Grievances to the Prince of Orange, 1688.

In the same folio volume of MS. in which we find the contingent furnished by Mass David Williamson, there is preserved what appears to be the original corrected draft of a long paper of grievances and sufferings, indexed in Wodrow's own hand "Representation of the Grievances of the Presbyterians in Scotland to the Prince of Orange, 1688."

If ever there was a document of the kind, in which it might have been expected that such an incident as the Wigtown martyrdom would find a conspicuous place, it is this. Redolent, as it is, of all the trash of calumnious exaggerations against the governments of the falling dynasty, that form the staple of these mean and unscrupulous productions, there is not an allusion to the drowning of two women at Wigtown. Yet that martyrdom would have been invaluable to the framers of this petition, which bears date only in the third year thereafter, when the fact could hardly require the aid of *tradition* to furnish it. Nor was this because the case of "cruelty to women" was overlooked. The *eighth* head of this heterogeneous indictment is the oft repeated chime rung upon the execution of

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[1] Claverhouse was well aware of the turbulent character of David Williamson. Writing to Queensberry from Dumfries, 24th February 1679, he says:—"My Lord, I hope your Lordship will consider how hard it will be to keep so vast a country as this is, with *so few forces*. Betwixt Portpatrick, and some of the Duke of Monmouth's bounds lying within the Stewartry of Annandale—where I hear *Mr Williamson* is at this present—there is above a hundred miles. However, my Lord, I shall do my best endeavours in everything I am commanded."—*Memorials and Letters of Dundee*, vol. ii. p. 194.

Isobel Alison and *Marion Harvie.* But there is not the slightest allusion to the sacrifice of the two beatified Margarets.

"*Eighthly:* They executed *several* simple women, for *mere words*, spoken out of their *zeal*, but *wanting knowledge.* It is impossible to relate all their boutcheries and cruel persecutions.

"The instruments of all these cruelties, and persecutions, were, especially, the evill counsellors,—*vizt.* the Privie Council, both by their acts, practices, and commands; the bloody Lords of the Justiciary, and Criminal Court; the King's Advocate, yet on life, Sir George M'Kenzie, pleading for these executions; the cruel Lord Bishops, with their Curats, instigating to all these things, besides their acting in them; the prophane and atheistical officers, and common souldiers, and dragoons. Now, how can any of these be trusted again? Who keept not faith to God, they will not keep it to men. Also, according to that maxim, false to God, never true to man."

It was a common trick of these calumnious libels, in which every department and branch of the Constitution, and the whole intelligence of the State, were sweepingly arrainged under one *Anathema Maranatha,* to generalize any individual instance, and that, too, falsely reported, as if it were a common habit of their so-called persecutors. Fountainhall has explained how the two termagants, Isobel Alison, and Marion Harvie (wretched ignorant women, doubtless, excited to their doom by the lurking conventicle preachers, but not the less dangerous on that account), brought death on themselves by their outrageous treason at the bar of the High Court of Justiciary, in the face of the public, cursing the King, and loudly upholding the murderers of Archbishop Sharpe as saints and martyrs, assassins for harbouring whom, for many months, they had been brought to trial. This is what the petition above quoted means, when it speaks of "*several* simple women executed for *mere words,* spoken out of their *zeal.*" This execution is the only instance of the kind that occurred during the reigns of the Restoration. The policy came to be doubted, as we learn from Fountainhall, and the example was never repeated. But what of the two women who suffered at Wigtown—not for treasonable revilings, and incentives to assassination—not for "mere words spoken out of zeal,"—but drowned, simply for *refusing to take the oath of abjuration?* That is the question at present. Is the paper quoted above one in which that sacrifice would have been left without an allusion to it, had it

really occurred only three years before, in 1685; a date, be it observed, *four years more recent* than the execution of the two women at Edinburgh, to which the petition so pointedly refers? Were the conventicle ministers of 1688 less informed of such instances than the covenanting ministers of 1710–11? That petition is entitled on the back,—"A large Representation of the Grievances of Scotland, to the Prince of Orange." And how it was got up, and in whose hands it was cooked, the following recommendation, with which it concludes, sufficiently evinces:—

"It is advised, 1. That some be sent with this address to the Prince of Orange, to be delyvered first to the Earle of Crawford, and other well affected noblemen and gentlemen there with him; and by them subscribed, and delyvered to the Prince. 2, That the subscriptions be written in a *by* paper, relating to this address, that the names be not *published* if it be printed; and who subscribes, would do it in the name of *ministers and others*, and of *many thousands* of this land who will adhere thereto; which is to be for a call and warrant to the Prince."

Why, in this "call and warrant" to him, this "Large Representation," was the treat of the Wigtown melo-dramatic sacrifice withheld from the Prince? Was it that the "meeting of *ministers*, and others, and the many thousands of this land," in 1688, were entirely ignorant of a scene which in 1710, and 1711, stirred the hearts of the whole people of Scotland with details never to be effaced from the memory, or from the "page of History," although "our Jacobins," indeed, even then, had "the impudence to deny" its truth?

4. Sir George Mackenzie corroborated by the Collector of Grievances and Sufferings in Nithsdale, Annandale, and Galloway.

The next paper of grievances and sufferings, issuing from the Presbyteries of 1688, and found in this collection, is of still more importance to the question in hand; for it comes from the very locality of the Wigtown martyrdom,—namely, from Galloway itself. Wodrow describes it, in his index, as "Grievances from Scotland 1661 to 1688, from Nidsdale, Anandale, and Gallaway." The paper itself is entitled, "Grievances from Scotland since the year 1661, containing also the losses sus-

tained by *Eupham Threapland*, and others in Nidsdale, Anandale, and Gallaway, by the Duke of Queensberry." Now, as the scene of the martyrdom in question is laid in the capital of Galloway, and as the President of the Court of the High Commission by whom those two females were tried and condemned was Colonel Douglas, the brother of Queensberry, it will be strange indeed if there be no mention, in 1688, of the most atrocious martyrdom that occurred in the "killing year" 1685, the cherished gem of all the martyrologies of Scotland.

In a paper of sixteen closely written quarto pages, stuffed to overflowing with *ex parte* assertions of individual sufferings, *especially of women*, the truth of which must all be taken on the *ipse dixit* of the nameless collector or collectors, there is not to be found the slightest allusion to the Wigtown Martyrdom. The object of the collection, which comes down to the year 1688, is, like all the rest, to prime the Prince of Orange, or rather his agents in Holland, Gilbert Burnet and Alexander Shields, as to who were most worthy, and who most unworthy, of power, place, and patronage under the coming dynasty. The Duke of Queensberry, and his brother Colonel James Douglas, who had been President of the High Commission on the Galloway Circuit, are of course particularly obnoxious. "Queensberry,"—it says,—"his cruell dealling with the cruell lawes made by him, makes him [*too?*] unsavory to the nation, and a terror to all sober minded, to think of his advancement to any office." Then there occurs a special reference to the law of the *Abjuration Oath*, framed to protect the whole community from Renwick's proclamation of intended assassinations and massacres. And as the Wigtown Martyrs were condemned to death for obstinately refusing to take that oath, had they suffered death as alleged, here was the proper peg on which to hang that exciting story. But all that we find is this: "Many unparallelled lawes when Queensberry was Commissioner; that it was treason to speak of, and own, the Covenant; lawes for absolut obedience to the King, and non-resistance, on any pretence whatsomever; on which an oath of abjuration was founded, for refusing whereof many suffered sad things, and *some* lost their lives, *it being allowed to kill of hand those who refused.*"

But what of the two women who were *formally tried* at

Wigtown, *with a jury*, for refusing this abjuration oath; and who, unquestionably, were not "killed of hand," but had a long day assigned them, to give them time to think better of it, as the minister of Glasserton himself admits? Amid the various instances alleged in this collection from Galloway of "good" and "honest" old women scourged in the town of Dumfries, and elsewhere, why is there not a single word about the young and the old woman so cruelly consigned to the rising tide of the Solway? Account for that, Glasserton. In your second edition of "History Vindicated," you will have to vindicate this local collector. Not that there is no mention whatever of women actually executed for high treason. Here we have, in the usual generalised form, the instance referred to by Sir George Mackenzie:—"Many their lives taken, men, and *women merely for their opinion*, who could not distinguish betwixt *authority* and *misapplied power*." This can have no application to the case of the Wigtown women refusing the abjuration oath. Even in Galloway they could find no other instance of women executed, to bear witness upon, than the case of Isobel Alison and Marion Harvie, hanged "merely for their opinion;" or, as the other accounts phrase it, "for mere words."

5. Sir George Mackenzie corroborated by the Collectors of Sufferings in Galloway, of date 11th May 1685, being the alleged date of the Wigtown Martyrdom.

Conclusive as is the utter silence, on the subject of this martyrdom, of all these zealous fishers for "sufferings" throughout Scotland, and even in the Stewartry of Galloway itself, the following paper, preserved in the same volume of Wodrow's MS., is still more conclusive. For we there come upon the report of a Galloway martyrdom alleged to have occurred at the Newtown of Galloway, on the 11th of May 1685, the *very date* assigned to the Wigtown martyrdom, and to have been perpetrated by Colonel Douglas, the *very man* by whom sentence of death was pronounced upon the Wigtown martyrs; and yet there is no allusion whatever to that far more important martyrdom in this collector's list.

This paper, which is of the same *ex parte* and calumnious stamp as all the rest, is headed,—"Memorandum of the severall inroads of the souldiours through the Stewartrie of Galloway, since January 1679, as also of their severall garisons, and the number of men shot on the fields and execut on scaffolds during the said tymes." It is also indorsed as follows:—"Memorandum of the severall garisons and inroads of the souldiours, from January 1679; and of the murders committed in the Stewartrie of Galloway, by Claverhouse, Lag, and Colonel Douglas, and others." This list comprehends the period from 1679 to 1688, both years inclusive; but it is only necessary to extract here the items which occur under the year 1685:—

"January 23d, 1685.—Cornal Douglas, with a partie of horse, killed six men at the Calduns [of Galloway].

The garisons of Earlstoune, Watterhead, and Machermoor, planted January 1685.

Six men killed by Lag and his partie at Lockerbie, February 19, 1685.

The 21st day 5 men killed by him and his partie at Kirkconnal.

The 20th of February [1685] 2 hung upon trees at Irongray, by Captain Bruce.

The Highlanders brought to the countrie the beginning of May [1685].

The *elivent of May* [1685]* a man shot at Newtoune [of Galloway] by Cornall Douglas and his partie, who cam in the said tyme.

June 11 [1685] Lag and a partie of dragoons killed uther twa men near to the place where he killed the 5 before.

June 13 [1685] two regiments cam to Newgallaway, and therefter went to Minigaffe. They stayed a twentie dayes, and killed a number *nolt* and *sheep*, belonging to suffering men."

The extreme weakness of our reverend opponent's handling of proof, and his manifest predetermination not to recognise proof, however conclusive, in anything that militates against the truth of this consecrated martyrdom, is nowhere more observable than in his very summary mode of dealing with the important negative evidence afforded by the silence of these contemporary collectors of sufferings, whose papers are found among Wodrow's own collection of manuscripts. The minister of Glasserton professes to consider this evidence of no weight at all. Nay, the absence of all allusion to that martyrdom, even by collectors of sufferings in the very locality, and on the *very day of it*, he somewhat inconsistently accounts for, by suggesting the

* The date of the Wigtown martyrdom.

comparative small importance of the event itself. What! The small importance of the Wigtown martyrs? Does not Lord Macaulay say, in a History of England written in letters of gold,—"The 11th of May, 1685, was made *remarkable* by more than one great crime. On the same day, two women, Margaret Maclachlan and Margaret Wilson—the former an aged widow, the latter a maiden of eighteen—suffered death for their religion, in Wigtownshire." Was this "great crime" only remarkable to Lord Macaulay? You say, reverend Sir, that these Orange conventicle informations (which I doubt if you have ever looked at except through me, and scarcely that), only "gave a *general* statement of their wrongs and grievances." You are totally mistaken. They are most circumstantial in their details, deal with every individual case they can think of to aid their cause, and descend to, and grossly pervert and exaggerate, every petty particular. That is the general character of these mean and malicious documents. You pass *sub silentio* the remarkable specification of "a man shot at Newtoune of Galloway, on the 11th of May 1685, by Colonel Douglas and his party,"—recorded without an allusion to the drowning of two women at Wigtown, on that same day, under the sentence of that same Colonel Douglas! Which would have been the best illustration for his purpose—the man shot, or the women drowned? Is it *possible* that an informer of this stamp, gathering his quota of sufferings on the very spot, could have been ignorant of this martyrdom of 1685, he hunting for all such instances in 1688? Was it not sufficiently remarkable *then* to be specially noticed? According to Sir Andrew Agnew, Providence, at least, thought otherwise. For from that zealous and fearless hereditary martyrologist—who keeps guard over the shrine of this martyrdom like the dragon, not of Wantley, but of Wigtown—we learn, that the retributive justice of Heaven saw fit to propagate physical diseases through generations in Scotland, in miraculous commemoration of the atrocity of this human sacrifice, sealed from that moment on the bodies as well as the minds of the martyr-ridden community whom the good Sir Andrew represents in Parliament. But we must allow his minister of Glasserton to tell his own story. Having disposed of the silence of Fountainhall in the

same summary manner, the reverend gentleman thus throws aside, as of no weight at all in the question, the silence of every one else who was most likely to have noticed the contemporary event, had it ever occurred. He is wilfully blind to the fact that this universal and prolonged silence cuts away the *very foundation* of his theory of *tradition*, which constitutes his whole case :—

"Nor is more weight due to the omission of any special mention of this Wigtown case in the 'calumnious papers of grievances and sufferings, penned by conventicle preachers' of these times. These being written, as Mr Napier says, 'to induce the Prince of Orange to invade the kingdom,' gave a *general* statement of their wrongs and grievances, and did not profess to give all the cases of suffering *in detail*.[1] Mr Napier endeavours to convey the impression that cases of suffering were so rare that such a case as the Wigtown one must, if true, have been chronicled by every one who wrote regarding the persecutions of these times. But this was merely one of many atrocities. *Probably*, however, the allusion in the Paper of Grievances, 'from Nidsdale, Anandale, and Galloway,' is to the Wigtown women; for the statement of this provincial collector, 'that of men and *women* merely for their opinion, who could not distinguish betwixt authority and misapplied power,' many had 'their lives taken,'—is *more probably* an allusion to an execution of women within the district to which the paper refers, than to that of the two women in Edinburgh, as Mr Napier contends."—(P. 29.)

This is weaker than the water of the Blednoch, for there is some salt in that. In the first place, it seems to be founded upon no acquaintance whatever with the nature and contents of the papers in question. These local collectors did not always confine their information to their particular locality; they ranged, in a loose, illiterate, and unscrupulous manner, as regards statement of fact, over the whole subject of Scottish grievances and sufferings. And, in the next place, as for the *probabilities* which the reverend martyrologist, in his dilemma, is fain to call to the rescue of his ruined case, how will they meet or account for the instance of a Galloway collector handing in the grievance of a man shot on the 11th of May 1685, and omitting any allusion whatever to the execution of the two Margarets drowned at Wigtown on that very same day? There is no probability, surely, that by the man who was shot was meant the women

[1] But not one of them makes the *slightest allusion* to the Wigtown case, while dealing with others most particularly and minutely.

who were drowned. May we not, then, be permitted, also, to moot the probability, to be deduced from this silence of the collectors in Galloway, that in point of fact no such "cruel" and "singular execution" (as the minister of Glasserton himself calls it) had ever occurred in Galloway? But we must not allow our reverend opponent's doctrine of probabilities, weak as it is, to confuse the evidence in this case. The origin of those expressions, "women executed for *mere words*," and "merely for their *opinion*," and because they were too ignorant to distinguish between "authority and misapplied power," can be distinctly traced to the case of the two railing termagants, Isobel Alison and Marion Harvie, executed at Edinburgh in 1681. Those expressions are just a truthless travestie, by conventicle tractarians, of Fountainhall's sentiments and scruples (already referred to) as to the *policy* of proceeding capitally upon convictions for high treason, through mere words, however in themselves treasonable and dangerously public, without any *overt act*. This could have no application to the case of the Wigtown martyrs. They were tried and condemned, not for *words* or *opinions*, but in terms of a special law, enacted for the public safety, under a most dangerous emergency, against Renwick's audacious and truculent proclamation; and which special law had declared that whoever refused to take the Oath of Abjuration should be deemed guilty of high treason, and be tried and condemned accordingly. But we are not done with our corroborations of Sir George Mackenzie.

6. Sir George Mackenzie corroborated by the silence of Fountainhall.

This is no stumbling-block to the author of "History Vindicated." He vaults over it with the agility of an acrobat. He first affects extreme astonishment at the pretension of the argument compared with its failure :—

"Sir George Mackenzie's statement *needs corroboration*, and accordingly Mr Napier tells us that it is 'corroborated by *all* the diaries and reports of his Whig opponent Fountainhall.' Such is the heading of a section of the *Case for the Crown*. How must the readers of the 'Case' be *surprised*, when, under this heading, promising an overwhelming proof,

they actually find, that there is nothing about the matter in *any* of the said diaries and reports; that Mr Napier's argument in substance is,—these women could not have been drowned at Wigtown, because Sir John Lauder of Fountainhall has not recorded that fact in any of his note-books! There are surely many things true in the history of that period, and this may be one of them, though not found in Fountainhall's voluminous *notanda*."—(*Hist. Vind.* p. 29.)

Reverend Sir, you here commence with a quirk that scarcely belongs to your cloth, and one so small, that I know no lawyer weak enough to have ventured to use it. I did not promise my readers that they would find Fountainhall positively reiterating, in *all* his diaries, and *all* his reports, Sir George Mackenzie's statement. I did not give any of my readers reason to be "surprised," when, on testing my statement, they found "nothing about the matter" of the Wigtown Martyrs in any of Fountainhall's collections. I told them just what you have told them,—"that there is nothing about the matter in *any* of the said diaries and reports." And that is just why *all* of them corroborate, *by their silence*, Sir George Mackenzie's statement. Are you not aware that a corroboration may be negative as well as positive?

None but those really ignorant of the scope and tendency of the voluminous and multifarious diaries of public events, commentaries on political affairs, and reports of judicial cases, civil and criminal, left in various manuscript volumes by Lord Fountainhall, would dream of regarding as inconsequential the inference to be deduced from his utter silence on the subject of the Wigtown Martyrs. The inevitable inferences are,—that the actual case could not have been of a nature to attract public attention; that the necessary condemnation of these poor deluded women, for maintaining for a time their treasonable obstinacy in refusing the Abjuration Oath, could not have resulted in their death by drowning; that far less could they have been executed, in pursuance of that sentence, by reason of James the Second having *refused* (as one theory has it) the royal assent to the pardon bestowed upon two poor females of the lower classes, by the whole Privy Council of Scotland, including the Lord Advocate and some of the supreme Judges; and that, least of all, could they have been *lynched* (as a still wilder theory has it) by "the people at Wigtown," or by "a high-

handed outrage of the provincial agents of the Government," —according to Dr Tulloch's improved version,—in the very teeth of the orders of that same Government, and of a royal pardon freely and constitutionally granted. What I maintain is, that the occurrence, in 1685, of a criminal *cause célèbre* such as supposed,—whichever of the above phases of it be assumed,—escaping all notice by Fountainhall, amounts to a moral impossibility. The inevitable conclusion is that it *never occurred.*

The paragraphs quoted above from the Glasserton manifesto, are immediately followed by so notable an example of the worthy minister's mode of gathering grapes from thistles, that we cannot forbear extracting that also:—

"Mr Napier might have seen that Fountainhall's *silence* was at least as good an argument on the *other side of the question.* This eminent Whig lawyer was living in Edinburgh, keeping his eye on the doings of the Government, and taking notes (very fair and candid ones) of their proceedings. He was as ready to record their good deeds as their evil ones, and would doubtless have found it less laborious and more pleasant. Their doings in the remote parts of the country he *could not always know;* but what they did in Edinburgh he was sure to be informed of. But still, he has not entered it in any of his note-books, among other 'memorable occurrents,' that two women who had been sentenced at Wigtown to be drowned (that being now, through humanity of the Government, the punishment of female traitors), were at this time brought to Edinburgh, where, having confessed their wickedness and taken the oaths, they were first reprieved by the Council, and then pardoned by the King. Thus it would seem, that Fountainhall's silence *corroborates both sides of the question*, and so can be regarded as of *no weight on either side.*"

Vindicator of History,—you awed me, at the outset of your Vindication, by the solemn announcement, that you would examine my logic freely, but neither notice nor imitate my style. You will forgive, however, a little freedom of style in examining your logic. It resolves into this:—"Fountainhall's *silence* corroborates both sides of the question, and so can be regarded as of no weight on either side." The silence must be very significant that corroborates both sides of a question. If that great Whig lawyer's silence really has this effect, we may say of him what Talleyrand said of some diplomatist, that he was gifted with "*un grand talent pour le silence.*" But we cannot afford to lose Fountainhall in such a muddle of logic as this.

The silence of a diligent and faithful chronicler of sensational events may be very corroborative, *negativè*, of a statement elsewhere, that an event, of the kind he was accustomed to chronicle, *did not* occur. It is more difficult to see how the reticence of such a chronicler can be equally corroborative, or corroborative at all, of a statement that the sensational event supposed *did* occur. Your logic, reverend Vindicator, is, that Fountainhall's silence furnishes "as good an argument on the other side of the question." How is that? What is the one side, and what is the other? The one side is, that these two women,—*ex concessis* condemned to be drowned at Wigtown, but afterwards reprieved for pardon, at Edinburgh,—*were consequently not drowned at Wigtown.* We can see how Fountainhall's *silence* (as to their being drowned nevertheless) may corroborate that. The other side is, that the women condemned to be drowned at Wigtown, but so reprieved at Edinburgh, *were nevertheless drowned at Wigtown.* Not the silence of Talleyrand's diplomatist himself could corroborate that. You will call this lawyer's logic. But yours is martyrological logic—the worst of all logic. However, let us take a plainer and more deliberate view of the matter.

No one would venture to affirm that Fountainhall's voluminous collections will be found to contain absolutely every event of the kind which that busy political lawyer was in the daily habit of recording. He has noted, doubtless, many events of no great importance, and omitted some of more. It is not pretended, nor is it the argument of our Case for the Crown, that the fact of no record or note having been kept by Fountainhall of some event that must have fallen within the scope of his *memoranda*, is *proof* that no such event had occurred. Fountainhall having failed to "enter in any of his note-books, among other memorable occurrents, that two women who had been sentenced at Wigtown to be drowned were brought to Edinburgh, where, having confessed their wickedness and taken the oaths, they were first reprieved by the council, and then pardoned by the King," is no proof whatever that all this did not occur. No one would attempt to say so. The above is only a rigmarole way of putting the simple case of two women having been condemned in a Circuit Court, and pardoned, on their crying *peccavi*, by the Privy Council. Fountainhall's

silence here argues nothing except this, that a condemnation occurring in an obscure and comparatively inconsequential case which had been immediately followed by pardon as a matter of course under the circumstances, he did not happen to consider as noteworthy. But when the story comes to be, that this ordinary incident of the troubles was immediately followed by the very extraordinary fact that the pardoned women were nevertheless executed at the circuit town in pursuance of their sentence there, Fountainhall's silence becomes strong corroborative evidence, *negative*, in support, not only of Sir George Mackenzie, but of "our Jacobites who had the impudence to deny the fact."

The truth is that, assuming the Wigtown martyrdom to be a myth, the trouble which the two obscure heroines of the conventicle fable brought upon themselves by their own senseless obstinacy, which trouble lasted from the 13th of April 1685, when they were condemned, to the 30th of the same month, when they were pardoned, presented no feature very likely to cause Fountainhall to open his note-book. As the case occurred at Wigtown he was not of counsel for the parties, and there was little in the fact of two misguided country women first refusing the Oath of Abjuration, and then extricating themselves from the penal consequence by taking it—to rear it into a public event worth noting. It had not the slightest pretension to be a *cause célèbre*. But very different is the state of the case upon the assumption that that martyrdom really occurred. Two women who had been condemned to be drowned at Wigtown, by a Circuit Court of Justiciary, were *pardoned* at Edinburgh, by that supreme tribunal, the Privy Council of Scotland, in full conclave assembled. I pin you to the fact of the *pardon*, Glasserton. You cannot escape from it. Wodrow himself calls it "a material pardon;" and if you deny Wodrow, history, according to your own argument, is dethroned. Nevertheless, as the story goes, the two women were drowned at Wigtown, *in pursuance of their sentence*, on the 11th day after their pardon in Edinburgh! Such is the strange tale of the Wigtown Martyrs! Now, not only would that have been most notable, but Fountainhall, in omitting to note it, would have failed to record, and to account for, the most remarkable

event that ever occurred in the history of the criminal jurisdiction, and of the government of Scotland,—yet an event lying directly in the path of his daily *notanda*. And thus it is, Vindicator, that Fountainhall's silence corroborates only *one side* of the question. Sir George Mackenzie's statement, utterly incompatible with the romance of the Wigtown martyrdom, is strongly corroborated by the silence of Fountainhall as to any such event having occurred; and the silence of Fountainhall, on the other hand, is perfectly accounted for by the statement of Sir George Mackenzie. As for the *other side* of the question, it is *nowhere*.

But this negative corroboration of Sir George Mackenzie's statement is not the only confirmation which that derives from Fountainhall's invaluable records. Tony Lumpkin, in his letter to the *Scotsman* already commented upon, affecting a generous desire to save the truth of that best abused of public prosecutors, ingeniously suggests that his declaration was an instance, not of bad faith, but only of bad grammar. Tony, however, does not seem to have been aware that *five* female martyrs, and not merely four, stand in the page of Wodrow's history, as having been executed during the two reigns of the Restoration. To save Sir George, the martyr *Christian Fyffe* must be accounted for, as well as the Wigtown martyrs.

This wretched virago, of the same murderous Magus-Moor type as the two women hanged in 1681, was tried for a very violent assault upon one of the ministers of Edinburgh, in his own church on a Sunday, as he was quitting his pulpit after divine service, her violence being also accompanied with every form of truculent execration and threats poured out against the King. Wodrow quotes the indictment under which she was tried before the High Court of Justiciary, and then invests her with his diploma of martyrdom in these terms:—"Without *any difficulty* the assize brings her in guilty, and the Lords sentence her to be hanged at the Grassmarket upon the 7th of April 1682." The fanatical kirk historian Crookshanks, one of Wodrow's scholars, and much relied upon by covenanting writers, states, still more explicitly, that "she was sentenced to be hanged upon the 9th of April, *which was done accordingly*." But is this true? Did Wodrow and Crook-

shanks verify this "suffering" from any authentic records? or did they derive it from that broker's shop of history, so invaluable to them—*tradition?* Sir George Mackenzie's emphatic declaration resolves into a denial, not merely that the Wigtown women were executed, but also that Christian Fyffe suffered. Here, then, is another difficulty for you, Vindicator. "If, after having stood on the page of history for a century and a half without challenge, the story of the execution is disproved now, what fact in history can be regarded as certainly true?" That poser of yours, in reference to the Wigtown martyrs, is just as applicable to this Grassmarket martyr. For her crown of martyrdom is as old as theirs, and is only being challenged *how*. You also say, that if Wodrow's history is to be proved false, "not merely as to its *views and opinions*, but as to its *very facts*, what history can be accepted as true?" The simple answer we have already given, namely, that Wodrow's history being composed of many false views and opinions founded on many false facts, is not the true standard of history. Now, the suffering of Christian Fyffe, like the suffering of the Wigtown martyrs, is one of Wodrow's "very facts," that are *not* facts. Yet it has stood on the page of his history "for a century and a half unchallenged." Well, I challenge it now. But here we are met by another of your logical apothegms, with which you would fence Wodrow's facts as with a sevenfold shield,—"When a fact has got its place in history, on *reliable evidence*, and has *stood the ordeal* to which all history is subjected before it is generally received, it must be allowed to keep its place: No one, in an after age, may come forward on slight grounds and say, 'That is not true.'" Hoity, toity, Glasserton! Never mind the style. Why, reverend Sir, this is quite a new view of human annals. It is the misfortune of all profane history to be too generally received before it has been subjected to any ordeal whatever; and the ordeal often comes too late. On hurries History, the hussy, slipshod with lies, while "panting Truth toils after her in vain." Upon what "reliable evidence" did ever the Wigtown martyrdom take its place in history? What "ordeal" did it ever stand until now? And how is it now standing it? Do I say "that's not true," on "slight grounds," when I

appeal to the Government *pardon?* Do I impugn it on slight grounds, when I appeal to the word of Sir George Mackenzie, and the silence of Fountainhall?—while you appeal to "*A Hind Let Loose,*" and "*Faithful Contendings Displayed,*"—against the "absurdity and ferocity" of whose political Christianity Lord Macaulay thought it necessary to warn the world.

But what of Christian Fyffe, martyred by Wodrow and Crookshanks, in the Grassmarket of Edinburgh, on the 7th of April 1682? Does she remain a thorn in the side of Sir George Mackenzie's Vindication, which even the generous grammatical championship of Tony Lumpkin had failed to extract? Or is it possible that she, too, was pardoned? The martyrology of Scotland is safe in this instance from the books of the Privy Council; for the volume is lost that would have registered her pardon, if pardoned she was.[1] But here, again, comes Fountainhall to the rescue, and this time not through the medium of his silence. A murderous assault by a female upon a clergyman in the metropolis, while descending from his own pulpit, truculent execrations against the Sovereign uttered by a furious female in the face of a peaceable congregation, and the Stuart-government disposal of the case,—(which surely our very reverend reprover for "delirious abuse," will not reckon among his "*official brutalities* that made the Restoration Government odious throughout Scotland," or "the *systematic butcheries* of a *hardened and profligate* Government,"[2])—Fountainhall had considered worthy of memory, and thus noted:—

"27th March 1682: At Criminal Court, the woman called *Christian Fyffe*, who had struck Mr Alexander Ramsay, the minister of Edinburgh, was condemned to be hanged on the 7th of April next, for railing upon his Majesty, calling the King a *villain*, a *knave*, an *apostate perjured man*, who deserved to be *murdered*, &c.; which she *would not retract*, though *her life was offered her if she would do it.* This was a *wild delusion of Cameron's sowing.* But the Privy Council, looking on her as mad, REPRIEVED HER."

Fountainhall did not mark his record thus emphatically. But I have done so, Vindicator, that they who run may read. And mark this, too, that Fountainhall uses the word *reprieve* as being

[1] The Privy Council Register from August 1678 to August 1682 has not been recovered.

[2] Principal Tulloch's Essay on the Wigtown Martyrs.

synonymous with *pardon*. Unquestionably, Wodrow was ignorant of this mercy. *Tradition* never helped Wodrow to *pardons*. He was also ignorant of the pardon of the Wigtown Martyrs, until, while in the full swing of his History of Sufferings, he stumbled upon that provoking pardon in the latent Privy Council Register, which stupified the puzzle-headed martyrologist with a too strong aroma of truth, and caused him to stultify his story, and himself. Wodrow's personal ignorance of anything about the Wigtown Martyrdom is most significant. He was born in 1679, therefore six years of age in the year of that terrible event. The memory at that age has some powers of retention, and the scene would be the most exciting of that memorable year. Moreover, there was every reason for such a story being imprinted on his youthful mind. It must have been the all-absorbing topic with every member of his family and their associates. His father, and he who became his father-in-law, were both conventicle leaders. His uncle was hanged for high treason, and his father was saved from the same fate by hiding. If the marvellous story of drowning which Wodrow tells in his history had been true, would a boy of such a breed, when six years of age, not have heard of it, and listened to it so often as never to have forgotten it? But, from his own shewing, there was no more trace of it on his mind, no more reminiscence of it in his brain, than there was of the Deluge. He does not pretend that there was. And when the most remarkable phase of that tragical romance, the *previous pardon*, fell accidentally under his notice, he came for the first time to know a fact he had never dreamt of before. There is something both ludicrous and contemptible in the following confession of this great martyrological authority, written in a letter to King William's Scotch *factotum*, Carstares, 14th June 1714:—

"The more I dip into that *dreadful time*, the greater necessity I see of a *well vouched* account of it. I am truly sorry I should have been put upon the giving a beginning to a thing of this nature; who was not born when many of these cruelties were acted, and have *no thread to lead me* to any inquiries into them; and wish heartily it had been engaged in by any other. But since I am entered on it, and cannot say I *want matter* could I shape it right, I am going as far as my materials will carry me, and shall lay my rude draft *before you and others*, and be *entirely directed what to do*."

These *forgotten pardons* are terrible thorns in the side of the Kirk's histories of Sufferings. They transfer the suffering to the historian. Rely upon it, Wodrow lost his rest the night after that terrible discovery of his, that the Wigtown Martyrs were pardoned at Edinburgh, instead of being drowned at Wigtown. The impotent struggles of the present martyrologists to extract that thorn, will be dealt with in another number of our *corroborations*. Meanwhile it is amusing to observe, that Vindicator himself, while in full tilt against the "Case for the Crown," has been breaking his shins over some untoward pardons, which, from the splutter in his text, it would seem he never expected to find in his way.

Our reverend opponent makes great innings on the old ground of the vulgar calumnies and exaggerations against Queensberry and his terrible henchman Claverhouse. I shall quote the passage *in extenso*, as it is about the best specimen of his lively or sarcastic vein.

"These itinerant Commissions of Justiciary were a new feature of the time.[1] That of 1684, consisting of the Marquis of Queensberry, Lord Drumlanrig, and Claverhouse, seems to have done an almost incredible amount of business. *It is said* that two thousand *fugitives* were prosecuted. Justice must have been dealt out in a very summary way. It seems to have taken about the same time then to decide a man's fate in a court of justiciary, that it does now to sell an ox in an auction mart.[2] The records of the Sheriff-court of Wigtown still bear testimony to the despatch of business by this Commission, which held court there on the 17th of October 1684. Sir Andrew Agnew, in his work so often referred to,[3] states that he has looked into these records, which are voluminous, and out of *fifty-five* cases disposed of by the Commissioners (it would seem in one day), he gives *nineteen* in the terms of the record, which are *exceedingly instructive* as an illustration of justice in those unhappy times. It does not seem to have been thought necessary to call witnesses to prove the guilt of a prisoner. The prisoner himself is generally solemnly sworn

[1] And a very necessary one. The recent special commission appointed to try the Manchester murderers, was "a new feature of the time." The *Fenians* of the reigns of the Restoration were far more dangerous to the State, and far more murderously inclined, than the Fenians of the reign of Queen Victoria.

[2] I am quite unable to test the accuracy of this ingenious measure.

[3] "*Hereditary Sheriffs*, pp. 409-419." This is a work greatly relied upon, and much quoted in "History Vindicated." I am honoured with special notice therein, which I feel bound to acknowledge more particularly in the sequel.

and examined, and *so* constrained to criminate himself; and if he will not swear and depone in his own case, he is held as guilty.[1] The usual crimes are: having conversed with rebels, and shewn them common humanity; having heard intercommuned ministers preach; and having had children baptised; or merely refusing to take the test. Yet, though no greater crimes are charged, of the nineteen cases given as a specimen, *four men* and *three women* are banished to the plantations (which means being carried thither and sold as slaves); *two* other men, who are 'egregiously guilty of converse, &c.,' and are willing to take the test, have their case referred to the Lords of Justiciary at Edinburgh; and two other men, 'whose crymes are extraordinary, conform to their own subscryvit declaration, who also disowns the King's authoritie, and approves of rebellious principles, and are secured in irons,'—are also sent to Edinburgh for trial.[2] Others, whose converse with rebels was accidental, and who promised and agreed to do all that was required of them, were merely *tested*, and *got off*—though *doubtless with a wounded conscience.*

"The cases of the *three women are specially note-worthy.*

"'*Margaret Gordon*, goodwife of [Hay of] Arioland, elder, confesses resett of Mr Wm. and John Hayes, her sons, and that Mr Samuel Arnot had kept conventicles in her house; and being interrogat if she harboured or resett any rebel or other fugitive, or heard any more vagrant preachers, *refuses to depone.*

"'Committed to prison.'" (Signed) "'QUEENSBERRY.'"

"At a subsequent sederunt they were brought up for sentence."

"'List of woman panells who *refuse to depone* anent harbouring, resetting, conversing, and entertaining of rebells, and are secured:—

"'Margaret Gordon, goodwife of Arioland, elder;

"'Margaret Milligan, spouse to James Martison, rebell;

"'Margaret M'Lurg, spouse to Alexander M'Lengan, rebell;

"'The Lords Commissioners having considered the confessions of the above named Margaret Gordon, Margaret Milligan, and Margaret M'Lurg, and they *refusing to depone anent harbour, converse*, etc., decerns, adjudges, and ordains them to be banished to the plantations,

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[1] This is all pure *bunkum*. Where witnesses were required, witnesses were examined, not otherwise. It was not necessary to call witnesses in the cases of "two thousand *fugitives*," nor in the case of those who refused to answer interrogatories, or to take the Abjuration Oath. It suits the case of the worthy minister of Glasserton, when indulging in such arguments as these, to ignore the state of the times, to deal with facts *ad libitum*, and to cast authentic history to the winds.

[2] And pray why not? Suppose any of the worthy minister of Glasserton's present parishioners were, as Fenians, to "deny the Queen's authority, and approve of rebellious principles," and *threaten the Queen's life*, would Vindicator object to their being "secured in irons, and sent to Edinburgh for trial"?

and to remain prisoners in the meintyme, till a fitt occasion offer for that effect. QUEENSBERRY, *I.P.D.*

"'Wigtown, 17 *Oct.* 1684.'"

"Here is a *fact* illustrative of the treatment of women by a Royal Commission in Wigtown in 1684, which needs no comment. Three women are sentenced to be banished to the plantations,—*i.e.*, sent to the West Indies, and sold as slaves; two of them for speaking to their husbands, the other for speaking to her two sons, they being rebels."[1]

Now, all this is very dreadful. But our reverend Vindicator, in humble imitation, it would seem, of Wodrow, has no sooner reared this giant of cruelty than he cuts him down again with his own hand. Discovering the fact probably after his text was written, he relieves the feelings he has just been harrowing, by letting his readers know, in *a note*, that his "*three women*" were all "released" from their confinement, and neither sent to the plantations, nor sold as slaves!

"It appears from the Penninghame minute of Sufferings that the sentence of banishment *was not executed* in the case of M'Lengan's wife, who was released after a *long imprisonment*.[2] The same minute shews that the wife of a James Martin was also *released*. This may be the same person who is said to be the wife of James Martison.[3] If these two were *set free*, so, it *is probable*, was Mrs Hay [Margaret Gordon]; but regarding her fate we have *no information*."

Can anything be more ridiculous than all this, or more instructive as to the merits of the Scotch martyrologies and fanatical "sufferings." The minister of Glasserton,—with the assistance of Sir Andrew Agnew, who "states that he has looked into these Wigtown records, which are voluminous,"—undertakes to prove therefrom that "three women are banished to the plantations, which means being carried thither, and then sold *as slaves*." He adds,—"The cases of the *three women* are specially noteworthy," because they were disposed of in this inhuman manner merely for speaking to their husbands and sons. But what is the real truth of the case, which can be gathered even from the pages of "History Vindicated?"

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[1] *Bunkum* again. The record quoted proves that these three women were *not* sentenced merely for "speaking to their husbands and sons."

[2] The fanatical record itself only says, "imprisoned a *considerable* tyme." Doubtless not a day longer than she deserved.

[3] The record leaves no doubt that it is the same woman.

Three wives and mothers of notorious fugitive rebels, so conducting themselves as to prove that they were women dangerous to the State, *compel* a sentence of banishment against them by contumaciously resisting the authority of the law,—are sent to prison "meanwhile," but after a time are all released, their sentence of banishment having been remitted! And these three cases of women "banished to the plantations, and sold for slaves," quoted as "specially noteworthy" in reference to cruelty to women, and as being "exceedingly instructive as an illustration of the administration of justice in those unhappy times," the Vindicator of History offers in corroboration of his side of the question, that the Wigtown Martyrs were first pardoned, and then executed!

Martyrdom in the text, illustrated by mercy in the notes, composes a martyrology at once curious and consoling. Wodrow set the example. He first proved, by the Penninghame Kirk-session Records of 1711, that the Wigtown women were inhumanly martyred in 1685; and then he proceeded to prove, by a subsequent discovery of the State Records of that same year (the truth of which he did not impugn), that they were humanely pardoned! And still he clung to the martyrdom! So wedded to Wodrow is the minister of Glasserton, that this very remarkable *see-saw*, between calumnious accusations of cruelty and reluctant admissions of humanity, in reference to one and the same example of martyrdom, is piously sustained, in a minor degree, and on a humbler scale, in "History Vindicated."

7. Sir George Mackenzie corroborated by "*Faithful Contendings Displayed.*"

The character of this work, and of the fanatics whose sayings and doings it purports faithfully to record, has been emphatically pronounced upon by Lord Macaulay. "They wanted not only freedom of conscience for themselves, but absolute dominion over the consciences of others," &c.—"To reasons such as guide the conduct of statesmen and generals, the minds of these zealots were absolutely impervious," &c.

"If any person is inclined to suspect that I have exaggerated the absurdity and ferocity of these men, I would advise him to read two books, which will convince him that I have rather softened than overcharged the portrait,—the *Hind Let Loose*, and *Faithful Contendings Displayed*."

The last named production consists, in fact, of the minutes, illustrated, of the meetings held from time to time by those banded rebels,—revolutionary agitators of the most violent stamp,—called "Society People." These were the Fenians of their day, but more murderously inclined, and far more dangerous to the State.[1] The minutes of their secret meetings were kept, and strung together with some trash of his own, by Michael Shields, brother to the infamous author of the "Hind Let Loose," Alexander Shields,—*par nobile fratrum*. The patron saints of this pestilent sect,—the gods of their idolatry,—were Cameron and Cargill; the first killed in a skirmish with the Government troops in 1680; the second hanged in 1681, the same year in which were executed the only two female rebels who suffered in the reigns of the Restoration. Of these conventicle Covenanters Sir Walter Scott held the same opinion as Lord Macaulay, and expressed it in language at least as strong. In a letter to Southey he declares that "the beastly Covenanters against whom Dundee acted, hardly had any claim to be called men, unless what was founded on their walking upon their hind feet. You can hardly conceive the perfidy, cruelty, and stupidity of these people, according to the accounts they have themselves preserved."[2] Such saints as Welsh, Peden, Cameron, Cargill, Shields, King, Kid, and Renwick (which last, by the way, was hanged in 1688 by the *Whig* Lord Advocate, Sir John Dalrymple), excited many to the gallows. They had the merit of exciting some females of the lower orders into devils incarnate.[3] Their sweetest incense was the blood of the venerable Archbishop. Nor was it

[1] Wodrow himself admits, but in the midst of very false history, that tho "Society People" were the perpetrators of the cowardly murder of the two soldiers in their beds at Swine Abbey,—vol. iv. p. 149. See the "Case for the Crown," p. 23.

[2] Vindicator, if I had said that, what would you have said of me?

[3] See this illustrated in the "Case for the Crown," pp. 21, 22, *and note*.

the lower and more disreputable class of women alone that came under their influence. From the criminal libels against Lady Fleming of Ferm, and the spouse of the ex-Provost of Glasgow, we learn that these two agitators of the gentler sex against the State were in the habit of presiding at field conventicles, seated upon "high chairs," on either side of that outlawed rebel, Mas John Welsh, with whom they constantly associated. It was the triumph of such hill preachers to cause the murderer and the assassin to gnash their teeth, and clutch their "shabels," and the old crones of the covenant to tear their head gear, their "mutches and bigonets," against Church, King, constitution, and the hangman. Criffel might have sunk in Solway without diverting the attention of the "suffering remnant" from that old routing rebel, Welsh, or those towering thrones of female turbulence, folly, and vanity. Sir Walter Scott's happy touch about the "young plants of grace" in his immortal ballad, was founded on his shrewd surmise that not a few of the younger females attended such revivals, and roving congregations, really to worship God after their own fashion. Their great apostle, Cameron, told them so, in terms more plain than refined, when preaching at Kirkmahoe. "Those who come out to see a man only, or to be seen of men, will probably go away as filthy as they came." This attractive orator was first sent on his mission to Annandale by the outlaw Welsh, with the injunction to "set the fire of hell to their tails." He has certainly left his mark behind him. A kind of "revival," of his famous Sanquhar high treason of 1680, seemingly roused to action by nothing better than the transposition, in the course of time, of the numerals in the date, was inaugurated at Sanquhar by Professor Blackie of Edinburgh, assisted by Provost Whigham of Sanquhar, Colonel Shaw of Ayr, and some fanatical ministers, in 1860. Cameron must have been at the tail of the Professor, who blazed off upon the occasion like a rocket of Greek fire. We may believe their chronicler when he says,—"The learned Professor of Greek in the University of Edinburgh, standing on the broken wall of a crumbling feudal fortress, discoursing on the men of the Covenant to the people of Nithsdale, was a *unique* and interesting sight." But the speech of the day was

from a military gentleman. "Colonel Shaw of Ayr, having been introduced by Provost Whigham, said,—'He read of *Claverhouse*, and he wanted words to express the loathing and contempt he entertained for that miserable military *scavenger*, who was *no soldier* and *no gentleman*. He could not dip his tongue in a cesspool vile and filthy enough to paint his character. As respects Claverhouse and Charles II., he might say, like master like man, for the King was the vile slave of his own lusts,—a miserable *brothel-keeper*, who ought not to have been *allowed* to live, but should have been strangled *at his birth*."[1] This, too, beats me, Glasserton, although your Aid, in the *Scotsman* "regards Mr Napier as *unapproachable* in this department of *delirious abuse*." But since your reverend and sarcastic *scutifer* says of me, that I am Sheriff in those parts, and "*not* a Mexican official under Juarez," so I may say for myself that I never dipt either my sword or my pen, far less my tongue, in those "filthy cesspools" of Sanquhar, which the gallant Colonel, if he be not misreported, would really seem to have searched for, and to have tasted not altogether in vain. *Mais revenons à nôtre propos.*

Michael Shields tells us that the meetings of the faithful contenders, whose minutes he illustrates, commenced immediately "after the death of that famous minister and martyr, Mr Donald Cargill, July 28th, 1681." They met for the first time on the 15th December thereafter, and were continued from time to time until 1690. Accordingly, they embrace the period of the ever memorable martyrdom of 11th May 1685; and seeing that this scribe tells us himself,—"I shall first give some short hint of the state of the country every time these meetings occurred, especially how it was with that persecuted party at *each of these times*, what persecutions they were meeting with from the avowed and bloody enemy,"—it can scarcely be doubted, if that great and exciting sacrifice ever occurred at Wigtown, that it would form the *leading topic* of tyrannical cruelty in the remarks applicable to the meeting held immediately after the event.

But no scene of drowning is there recorded,—no mention

[1] A somewhat Irish mode of retribution for the sins of manhood.

is made of the Wigtown Martyrs. And this is the more remarkable, that the Oath of Abjuration, for refusing to take which these women are said to have suffered, was the remedial and protective measure of Government, framed to meet the truculent principles and murderous proclamations of this very sect.

Worthy and reverend Sir, widely as we differ in our *style*, freely as we deal with each other's *logic*, and irreverently as I am constrained to treat your handling of evidence, believe me I have no disposition to doubt the faithfulness of your contendings. Indeed, it gave me great pleasure to record how faithfully a martyrdom for which you contended in your text, has been commuted into a pardon in your notes. But you will forgive me for saying, that your historical muse is apt to supply the place of facts with assumptions, and to meet substantial and unequivocal *proofs* with the most shadowy *probabilities*. In the following paragraphs of "History Vindicated" I find, to my great surprise, that you actually press into the service of your "new proofs," these "Minutes of the Society People," as affording a strictly contemporary record of the drowning of the Wigtown Martyrs!

"Mr Napier is so unreasonable as to argue that if the execution at Wigtown is a fact, it must have been noticed by every one who wrote about the events of the period. His argument would have been worthy of some consideration had no writer, in the years *immediately succeeding* the date of the alleged martyrdom, alluded to it. That, however, cannot be said, for it is mentioned *just where we might have expected*,—that is, in the papers and pamphlets *written to expose* the proceedings of the Restoration Government. It is *probably* referred to in the minutes of the Society (the Cameronians) the *very year* it took place. These manuscript minutes, still in possession of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, were published in 1780, under the title of *Faithful Contendings*. In the narrative connecting the minute of 12th February with that of 28th May 1685, this statement occurs,—'Yea, women, and that both old and young, escaped not their bloody and barbarous hands, by whom some were *strangely murdered*, and many of them carried to prison.'"

Nay, reverend Sir, you have here dealt with dates in a manner more favourable for your conjecture than "Faithful Contendings" warrant. You say that the passage, or, rather, the mystical expression, on which you rely, occurs "in the narrative connecting the minute of 12th February with that of

28th May 1685." Pardon me: You have there passed over an intervening date of some consequence to the argument. Master Michael Shields having minuted the secret meetings,—"at the time and place appointed, viz. February 12th (1685), near Auchingilloch,"—and having also minuted that "it was appointed that the next general meeting should conveen at —— the first Wednesday of May" (the 6th, namely),—proceeds to give his own version (utterly false) of the oppressed condition of the lieges *up to that latter date;* for Master Michael is telling his conventicle beads in the most methodical manner. Now, in that connecting narrative,—connecting, namely, the minute of 28th February with that of 6th May,—it is, that the bead of "women strangely murdered" is counted. But the alleged date of the Wigtown martyrdom is the 11th of May in that year. So this troublesome suffering would have to be antedated, in order to bring it within the range of that particular illustration. Next we have this minute:—"But some few having met at ——— upon the 6th of May 1685, they condescended upon another meeting, to conveen at Blackgannoch on May 28th." Then comes the connecting narrative, relating to the period between the dates 6th May and 28th May, which narrative, intensely calumnious as usual, thus commences:—

"The case of the land *continued still*,"—*i.e.*, between 6th May and 28th May,—"sad and deplorable. Enemies were still hunting the poor people, in towns, villages, mountains, woods, and desarts, or wherever they heard any of them were seen, whereby many fell into their hands; some of whom they presently sacrificed, to satisfy their cruel lust; others they carried to prison, where they lay languishing in great distress."

But the *de quo queritur* is, were they drowning women at Wigtown? for this is the period that embraces the alleged date of the Wigtown martyrdom. Not a word on the subject of that extra-sensational sacrifice is to be found either in that, or in *any* of the illustrative links of Master Michael Shields' "Faithful Contendings."

It would seem, however, that "strangely murdered" is honoured with italics in "History Vindicated," for the purpose of suggesting the idea of *drowning*. This is being hard up for proof. Why might it not mean hanging? In Scotland,

more majorum, drowning female convicts was the rule, and hanging the exception. Females were frequently drowned in the "Nor' Loch" of Edinburgh for infanticide. But now let us assume, with Vindicator, that "strangely murdered" really means the Wigtown martyrdom. In that case, the fanatical authority so rashly quoted, stands convicted of a stupid calumny. Not one of the Wigtown martyrologists of the present day, including their enthusiastic chief Sir Andrew Agnew, has ever pretended, that any woman whatever, was drowned in Scotland "for her religion," throughout the whole reigns of the Restoration, except the two institutional saints of the Solway. Upon what materials, then, is founded that sweeping accusation against James the Second's Government of Scotland,—"yea, women, and that both old and young, escaped not their bloody and barbarous hands, by whom some were strangely murdered"? The unscrupulous generalization only rests upon a single example, which this libeller exaggerates into a system. And as regards his solitary example, it turns out, that the criminals were pardoned! That silliest of all silly theories, that the pardoned were executed *nevertheless,*—somehow or other, but nobody can tell, or ever has told, how or why,—cannot save the libeller. He either knew the fact of the pardon, or he did not know it. If he did not know it, he is an ignorant witness. If he did know it, and chose to ignore the fact, he is a false witness. In every view of it, the reference to "Faithful Contendings" is worthless.

Of precisely the same stamp, tarred with the very same stick, is the next authority presented to us in "History Vindicated," under the equivocal category of "papers and pamphlets written to expose the proceedings of the Restoration Governments." When that Dominie Sampson of the Conventicles, the minister of Eastwood, was groping in the darkest dens of fanaticism, to concoct his "Sufferings of the Kirk," with "not so much as a thread of these times in my head,"—such were the written sources from which he "aggravated the crimes of our enemies." Our reverend Vindicator's great object is to find some record of the Wigtown martyrdom in the very year of its alleged occurrence. "Faithful Contendings" scarcely serving his turn, he thus appeals to a thing called the "Infor-

matory Vindication," and with more confidence, as that actually contains the word *drowning*.

"The *Informatory Vindication*, written by Renwick, submitted to the *Societies* in 1686, and published by them the following year, contains this *undoubted* reference to the Wigtown execution: 'Drowning women, some of them very young, and some of exceeding old age.'"

This is not a very ample, or accurate reference. We learn from Wodrow himself, that the Society People's *Informatory Vindication* was "agreed unto, March 1687, and *Renwick* employed to draw it up." It was then "sent over to *Holland* to be printed, and the copies came home to them about the end of this year (1687). Care was taken to spread them through the country." We may rest assured of that; for a more contemptible commination of all magisterial authority, all legitimate and safe government, and all true Christian discipline, never issued from a manifesto of a meaner or more vicious stamp.

But, Reverend Sir, surely you could only have glanced at your authority? It is *Charles the Second* who is there accused of "drowning women." We find no such charge preferred against *James the Second*. Now, the "Wigtown execution" belongs to the latter reign. "Under which King, Bezonian, speak or die." Let us clear this matter.

In railing at the Restoration Sovereigns, that gallows-bird, Renwick, commences with King Charles: "And in the *first place*, for the *late* tyrant," &c. Here follows the usual venemous catalogue of calumnies, *expressly* directed against King Charles; *inter alia*,—"His cruelty over the bodies of Christians, in chasing, catching, and killing upon the fields, many without sentence passed upon them, or time previously to deliberate upon death; yea, and without taking notice of anything to be laid against them according to the worst of their own laws; *Drowning women*, some very young, and some of exceeding old age," &c., &c.

Now, if this be "an undoubted reference to the Wigtown execution," it is no less certain, that it distinctly and specifically refers to *Charles the Second*,—in whose reign nothing of the kind ever occurred. For, having broken this Conventicle phial over that monarch, the railer proceeds to pour out his wrath in the same style upon King James: "And in like

manner, in the *next place*, we disown the usurpation of James Duke of York *succeeding*, and insisting in the same footsteps of tyranny, treachery, and cruelty, with the same domineering over men and women's consciences, and cruelty to their bodies and estates, and oppressions over the land," &c.

Charles II. died on the 6th of February 1685; the Wigtown Martyrs were tried and condemned on the 13th of April thereafter, and pardoned on the 30th of that same month. No other women are said to have been drowned. So, if the accusation of "drowning women," which Vindicator has been so fortunate as to find in the "Informatory Vindication," be an "*undoubted* reference to the Wigtown execution," then Charles II. drowned the Wigtown Martyrs, and his successor, James II., pardoned them. Is that your logic, Vindicator?

The solution is instructive, and obvious enough. The special law in favour of female rebels,—unquestionably a law of humanity,—"But at this time you are not to examine *any women* but such as have been *active*, in the said courses, in a *signal manner*, and those are to be *drowned*,"—was issued by the Privy Council of Scotland to the Justiciary Commissioners at the end of the year 1684. There was no woman whatever drowned in terms of that direction. But as Renwick, and such like, wrote on the principle of monstrous lying, and of "aggravating the crimes of our enemies," the humane rule about women was calumniously and vaguely figured as having been cruelly put into systematic operation, and the assumed system, in the above instance, was referred to the Government of Charles II. Subsequently, however, in the hands of Alexander Shields, the two *pardoned* women were, *nominatim*, feigned to have been actually drowned *in pursuance of their sentence*, and then the lie took on all those fructifying accessories of "embellishment" and "imaginative fertility," which Dr Tulloch (whose language I quote) so unphilosophically referred to the basis of an actual sacrifice, instead of to its real origin,—a clumsy and factious falsehood, of obscure and gradual growth.

But you tell us, reverend Sir, appealing to such authors as these, with an air of triumph savouring of simplicity, that the Wigtown martyrdom "is mentioned *just where we might have*

expected,—that is, in the papers and pamphlets written to expose the proceedings of the Restoration Government." Most true. But being found there, and nowhere else, is surely a very cogent reason for judging it to be false.

Your mode of putting it, Vindicator, reminds me of an amusing climax in the maiden speech of a young Scotch barrister at an Ayr Circuit Court many years ago. A departed and much esteemed friend of my own, whose son is now rising into a statesman,—"*Eheu fugaces,* Glasserton, Glasserton, *labuntur anni,*"—was defending a criminal charged with theft under many counts, one of them for stealing oysters from a dwelling-house. The case was hopeless throughout. Among other things, the oyster-shells were found under the culprit's bed. But his ardent counsel (beside whom I was sitting at the time), exhibiting in his county town,—being the heir of a baronet's title and an Ayrshire estate,—was bent, as you are, reverend Sir, on gathering grapes from thistles, and fought the case like a brick. So, when he came to the very ugly fact of the shells under the bed, he made capital of it on the instant in this fearless fashion:—"Then, Gentlemen of the Jury, as for the oyster-shells found under the bed of my client,"—who was watching him the while with a comical look of puzzled curiosity,—"I say, Gentlemen, where on earth *but* under his bed would you have expected to find them?" This bold stroke, had it not been for the general complexion of the case, and some assistance from the bench, might have carried the Ayrshire jury.

8. The crowning Corroboration of Sir George Mackenzie furnished by Wodrow himself.

Perhaps no author, with the slightest pretension to the name of historian, ever so wrote himself down a browzer on thistles, as the minister of Eastwood in this matter. Indeed, he has narrowly escaped, if he have escaped, a more serious imputation. Let us see how he will stand that *ordeal* to which you tell us, reverend Sir, "all history is subjected before it is generally received."

Wodrow had not only perused Sir George Mackenzie's

Vindication with painful attention, but also the very elaborate and virulent answer to it by "A Lover of Truth." The fact, however, is not to be found in his history. But he could not fail to have been perfectly aware that the ex-Lord Advocate had emphatically declared, in his dying vindication of the Government, that only two female State convicts had been executed during both reigns of the Restoration, and that these two were *Isobel Alison* and *Marion Harvey*, hanged in company, in the reign of Charles II. That the fanatical and abusive answer to it (which, had he lived, Sir George would not have deigned to answer), had tacitly admitted that great Statesman's important declaration as to the treatment of women, and that this admission was no mere *oversight* (as already shewn in No. I. of these *corroborations*), Wodrow knew. But Wodrow's knowledge of all this is only to be discovered from his private correspondence. In his history not a word is found of that irresistible evidence, emanating from the highest and most trustworthy source. Nevertheless, we learn from Wodrow himself that he did not feel comfortable under the weight of Sir George Mackenzie's authority. He was painfully sensible that Sir George's defence was a great stumbling-block in the way of his own martyrological gatherings, looking, as it did, so like the real and simple truth. Moreover, he felt that "A Lover of Truth," with all his unscrupulous zeal, was not likely to destroy the testimony of that more truthful and high-minded official.

On the 11th of October 1714, eight years before the crowns of those martyrs had attained their celestial glory in his hands, Wodrow thus writes to Mr William Forbes, Professor of Law, in Glasgow:—"I send you the first draught of the first six years of our sufferings," &c. "I could heartily wish you took Sir George Mackenzie's remarks on the Government of King Charles the Second *in task*.[1] I have an Answer to it,

[1] The minister of Glasserton (p. 27), feeling no less than his prototype Wodrow the weight of Sir George Mackenzie's testimony, quietly interjects the following insinuation, in which he has no great faith himself, but casts it into his scale *quantum valeat*. "This 'Vindication' was published in September 1691, four months after the death of Sir George, and this *naturally* gave rise to *some suspicion* of its genuineness. *Granting*,

published in London, *but it's lame.*" The learned Professor, however, wisely declined that task, and nobody else undertook it. So Scotland's Martyrological General-in-chief had nothing for it but to ignore entirely, in his subsequent History, the dangerous testimony of the ex-Lord Advocate, and give all the *eclat* he could "get up," of conventicle and conventional fanaticism, to an absurd romance, that was absolutely incompatible with the truth of what Sir George had written.

Yet Wodrow had the strongest motives for doing otherwise, —had *truth* been on his side. Nay, if he himself were speaking truth, he actually had in his own hands the very best materials wherewith to meet Sir George. He tells us himself, that the Wigtown martyrdom was vouched in the most direct and unanswerable manner. He tells us, that the vouchers were *in his own hands!* He gives his readers to understand that the vouchers were the attestations of *eye-witnesses.* If he does not mean that, he means nothing. What he says, is, that the minister of Penningham, his now deceased friend, "was at pains to have its circumstances *fully vouched by witnesses, whose attestations are in my hands.*"[1] Why then did Wodrow *never produce them?* What more was wanting, to demolish the whole of Sir George Mackenzie's "Vindication," than to prove, by the production of those attestations, that his emphatic declaration, that the reign of James II. was guiltless of a female martyr in Scotland, was absolutely false, and that, of all men in the world, the ex-Lord Advocate must have known it? We learn from the martyrologist's private correspondence, that he greatly desiderated an answer to Sir George that would not be "lame." Why did he not furnish it in his own History?

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however, the testimony given in the *Vindication* to be *really* that of the ex-Lord Advocate, even to the italics, it really is of little weight."

This feeble insinuation is utterly baseless. No "suspicion of its genuineness" ever prevailed. It was published immediately after Sir George's somewhat sudden death, with his name on the title-page, and from the original copy written by Mr Andrew Johnstone, his amanuensis. It was immediately answered, expressly as the production of the ex-Lord Advocate. It is included in the folio edition of his collected works, published in 1716. Wodrow *insinuates no doubt whatever on the subject.* See *note* at p. 48 of the "Case for the Crown."

[1] See *supra*, p. xxxiv.

Because Wodrow had *not* truth on his side. Because Wodrow himself was *not speaking the truth.*

But this is not the worst count in the indictment against Mass John Wodrow, as regards the Wigtown Martyrs. Even while his fanatical History was hot on the anvil, he stumbled upon evidence which placed the integrity of Sir George Mackenzie in that question beyond all rational doubt. Let us now proceed to illustrate

How Wodrow used, and abused, the latent Records of the Privy Council of the Restoration.

When the Revolutionists triumphed in Scotland, and the Presbyterian reign of "rabbling" and terror (the immediate result of calling Claverhouse with the Scotch horse to London) became resistless there, the books and records of the Privy Council, doubtless left in the possession of clerks, disappeared, became dilapidated, latent in private hands, and generally inaccessible. Wodrow, however, grubbed them out, for the purpose of "aggravating the crimes of our enemies," as he made no doubt their contents, with his own report and gloss thereupon, would enable him to do. So long as eight years before his fabulous romance of the Solway was given to the world, he had obtained private possession of the *Acta* of the Privy Council, so far as they could then be recovered. This was at the very commencement of his martyrological labours, as we learn from his own correspondence. In a letter written to the reverend John M'Bride, minister at Belfast, dated 21st June 1715, he says, referring to the previous year,—"When I went in to the Assembly, I very luckily fell upon the *Registers of our Privy Council,* in the hands of *private persons,* and there indeed I met with a *black scene:* The looking over of these kept me some while in Edinburgh, after the Assembly was up; and I am promised access to the books of our Justiciary."

The luck that befell Wodrow, in "looking over" those records, between 1714 when he got them, and 1722 when he published the Wigtown story, which those records *extinguish,* was on the far side of his wishes. That he there "met with a black scene" is not true. If the whole of those Privy Council, Re-

cords, *Acta* and *Decreta*, were published *verbatim et literatim*, no better extinguisher of Wodrow's chronicles would be required. They are rife with examples of the anxiety of the Privy Council to exercise humanity whenever their duty to the State, in most alarming times, rendered that possible. A recent popular illustrator of the Domestic Annals of Scotland, running somewhat cursorily over those records, merely for characteristic examples of local history, and probably misled, like many others, by Wodrow's false report, was not a little surprised when he thus came to judge for himself. The ingenious and praiseworthy Mr Robert Chambers, although somehow or other he had entirely missed the entry of the reprieve of the Wigtown women, had yet read and extracted quite sufficient to justify him in the following report, diametrically opposed to Wodrow's. He is writing in no controversial humour, or polemical vein, but simply in the spirit of truth and justice, when, in this commendation of the maligned Government, he virtually condemns the maligner:—

"The pages of Wodrow have *familiarised* us so much with the idea of the Privy Council as a kind of inquisition for the suppression of a respectable dissent, that we can scarcely think of it in any other character. Yet a survey of its records would shew *many beneficent and merciful edicts* mingling with the severe orders against conventiclers. Petitions for freedom from sickly prisoners, or for an abatement of fines, are yielded to in *numberless* instances; indeed, they appear to have *never been refused.* In all matters apart from the unhappy religious disputes, there is *no lack of humane feeling*, or of a desire to promote the good of the community."[1]

But it should also be noted that "the unhappy religious disputes," which, indeed, called forth the utmost rigour of the executive, here means *rebellion in its most savage and murderous aspect* (so powerfully depicted by Lord Macaulay), engendering a state of matters destructive of the peace and safety of the community, and endangering the monarchy to an extent which is but feebly represented by *Fenianism* in our own day.

The history of our troubles may be never purified by the invaluable work; but were these Privy Council Records printed

[1] Chambers' Domestic Annals of Scotland, vol. ii. p. 338.

entire, and fully and fairly illustrated, we would have at last a truthful history of those deplorable times, and much shame and sorrow be wiped from the brow of calumniated Scotland. Had Wodrow been animated by the spirit which alone renders history valuable, he would have made other use than he has done, of the inspection he obtained, "in private hands," of these latent and dilapidated records. But the spirit of conventicle fanaticism, and the spirit of truthful history, are two things absolutely incompatible.

According to his own account, Wodrow was first enabled to commence his private study of the latent Privy Council Records in 1714. His marvellous history of the Wigtown Martyrs first saw the light in 1722. Between these dates his barnacles were never off those records. It became his duty, as Martyrologist Revolutional, to see that no evidence of a humane Government should be gathered therefrom. The desire to *spare the sex*, especially of the lower orders, and to *save the young*, was conspicuous in the councils of the Restoration. Hence there is no calumny more constantly stereotyped against those governments, in all that pamphleteering which is the sheet anchor of "History Vindicated," than the conventional phrase that they spared neither age nor sex. In vain had it been declared, that the protective oath, abjuring Renwick's murderous proclamations, was applicable only to all the lieges above the age of sixteen. In vain the order, issued by Government, had said that *no women* should be examined on the subject but such as had been treasonably active in a signal manner; and that no woman condemned to die for such treason was to suffer the aggravated horrors of a traitor's death. In vain no child was ever brought to justice, no woman ever drowned,—the fiat of Conventicle History went forth that the governments of the Restoration condemned all indiscriminately without judge or jury, and "spared neither age nor sex."

Wodrow grossly pandered to that falsehood. After he had discovered that the Wigtown women had been unconditionally pardoned, he left the monstrous fable of their impossible execution standing in his pages for history. After he must have known that the extravagant calumny was false, he left standing in his pages for history such a sentence as this:—"*Multitudes*

were cut off *every month* without the tedious formality of a *process;* besides, a good number of public executions at Edinburgh and other places, and the *barbarous drowning of poor innocent women within the sea mark!*"

If Wodrow stumbled upon a *white* scene, in the Privy Council Register, when he was looking for a "black scene," he turned the white into black by an ingenious process of his own. For instance, he found the following, and it is all that Wodrow knew about the matter. Of date 23d January 1679, the year of the murder of the Primate,—"The Lords of his Majesty's Privy Council, do hereby give order and warrant to the Bailies of Leith, to set at liberty furth of the Tolbooth of Leith, James Lawson, a boy *about the age of fourteen years,* prisoner there upon the account of conventicles." Such is the record. That a boy of that age, attending one of those "rendevouzes of rebellion," as the Government most justly called them, might so have demeaned himself as to render it very necessary to put him in the Tolbooth, may be readily conceived; but the terms of his subsequent release can bear no other construction than that he was leniently dealt with on account of his youth. Wodrow, however, perverts this to his own calumnious purpose, reducing, too, the boy's age, in the face of the record. I shall give his ingenious process of *blackening* in italics.

"In *persecutions* for conventicles, no age almost was thought *too young* to be attacked. Some time ago, a boy *not much above thirteen years of age*, had been seized at a conventicle, and was carried to prison. After he had continued *some weeks* there, and *would make no compliances*, some of the *councillors were informed about him;* and, being *ashamed at such severity*, to one who was, as it were, but a child, I find the following order given:—January 23d, 'The Lords of His Majesty's Privy Council give warrant to the Bailies of Leith to set at liberty James Lawson, a boy about the age of fourteen years, prisoner there upon account of conventicles.' We shall afterwards meet with some more of these *young sufferers.*"

That artistic touch, that the boy "would make no compliances," convicts itself. As regards children, "compliances" were only required from their parents; and the compliance of the oath of abjuration could not be required from any one under the age of sixteen. But let us turn to another of the Martyrologist's "young sufferers" of the tender sex.

The beautiful old story of Agnes Wilson.

A more audacious falsehood never desecrated history than the story of Agnes Wilson, which Wodrow's friend, the minister of Penninghame, extracted for him out of the records of his kirk-session, that it might enter the "Sufferings of the Kirk." That story is, that "Agnes Wilson, a child *not thirteen years*," was arraigned before the Lords Commissioners of Justiciary at Wigtown, as a rebellious subject; that she was condemned to die, because she refused to "hear the curate," and to take the abjuration oath; and that the sentence of death pronounced upon her was, that she "should be tied to a stake fixed within the flood-mark in the water of Blednoch, near Wigtown, where the sea flows at high-water, there to be drowned." It is added, that the father of this child went to Edinburgh, and "obtained her liberation from prison, under a bond of a hundred pounds *sterling*, to present her when called"! And then Scotland's martyrologist-in-chief enlightens history with this precious sentence:—"But to all *onlookers*, and *posterity*, it will remain an *unaccountable thing* to sentence a *child of thirteen years* to death for *not hearing* and *not swearing*." Let the candid reader ponder well this one item of the Penninghame romance, for the truth of the whole of which the minister of Glasserton faithfully contends: A child of thirteen years of age is brought for trial before the Lords Commissioners of Justiciary, Colonel Douglas, the brother of the Prime Minister, presiding. Wodrow at first calls her "a child *not* thirteen years of age." The law was, that the oath of abjuration could not be imposed upon any one under the age of sixteen.[1] Moreover, a special instruction to these Royal Commissioners was, that they were not to take in hand the case of any female delinquent who had not been *signally active* in rebellious courses. Nevertheless these Lords Justices cause this *female child* to *thole an assize* for refusing the abjuration oath,—condemned her to die,—fixed the day and manner of her execution,—and then, without a remission of the sentence, or the intervention

[1] See "Case for the Crown," p. 11, *note*.

of the Sovereign, her father gets the doomed child, dead in the eye of law, out *on enormous bail*, at head-quarters, to come when called for to be drowned! Reverend Vindicator of History, do you believe that story? I have my doubts if a well-educated female child of thirteen would. You are very shy of it. But you have tied and bound yourself to it. You cannot escape from your self-imposed fetters. Unless you maintain the absolute truth of that tit-bit in the Wigtown *olla-podrida*, your whole pamphlet goes down by the run, like an old woman's worsted stocking with the needles out. The minister and kirk-session of Penninghame, those veiled prophets whom you uphold as infallible, record it for a fact. It has stood in the page of Wodrow, whom you regard as the key-stone of history, unchallenged for a century and a half. You say, in reference to the whole story of the trial and condemnation of these three females, of ages from seventy to thirteen, that "it was published in Wodrow's *history* in 1722, on the authority of the local Church Courts, who *made themselves responsible for its truth.*" An integral, an inseparable part of that history, is the cruel judicial treatment, directly in the teeth of the law, and of the special instructions issued to those Royal Commissioners, of this child of thirteen. Responsible, indeed, those "local Church Courts" have made themselves for its truth. But must it, therefore, be true? Dr Tulloch says it must. Knowing as much about the members of these kirk-sessions in 1711 as he does about the man in the moon, the Principal thus issues his fiat *é cathedra*:—"The kirk-sessions of Penninghame and Kirkinner were composed of a number of *grave and respected men*, who, whatever may have been their prejudices, would have shrunk from a falsehood with *abhorrence*. We are not to trust their judgment, nor even reverence their faith; but to suppose that these men wilfully imposed upon posterity a fiction—and if the story was a fiction they must have known it—is simply *incredible*." Incredible? I would not have trusted them, or their Presbytery either, with a farthing's worth of truth, when their revolutionary fanaticism required the substitution of a fable. The Principal of St Andrews University maintains it for incredible, that that incredible story of the condemnation of the child of thirteen

should be *untrue*, seeing that it was recorded for a fact, by a Galloway kirk-session, during the first years of the Revolution!

But, Reverend Vindicator of History, I do not find that you meet that part of your case with a confidence implying the same perfect persuasion of its truth. I hunted, in vain, through your sixty-four pages of text, for a recognition of that interesting filly of fanaticism, only rising thirteen. Throughout your whole text she is entirely ignored by you as a party at the bar, who was doomed to the devouring waves along with the other two. At length I discover that you have thus dealt, very charily, however with that *impossibility*, in *a note*:—

"'While Douglas's commission was sitting at Wigtown,' says Mr Napier, 'two women, and *only two*, were tried and condemned to death.' Wodrow, *on the authority of the Penninghame Session Minute*, affirms that Agnes Wilson, a younger sister of Margaret Wilson, was tried and condemned at the same time, but that she was released on her father's giving a bond of £100 *sterling* (!) to produce her when called. Mr Napier denies that Agnes Wilson was condemned—1*st*, because she *was said*[1] to be only thirteen years of age, and the commission had no authority to try any under sixteen; and, 2*d*, because, if condemned with her sister, she must have been reprieved along with her; and, on the strength of *such reasoning*, he asks,—'Do we require further evidence to satisfy us that *that* part of Wodrow's story, at least, is a falsehood, as absurd as it is calumnious?' Mr Napier would rather believe that a kirk-session could record a wilful and *easily detected* falsehood, than that a Royal Commission could exceed their authority in the *smallest degree*, or even commit the *slight mistake* of considering a girl somewhat older than she actually was."

I would indeed. But the kirk-session falsehood of 1711, only first published in 1722, asserting a fact said to have occurred in 1685, was not so easy of detection; nor was it likely that the task (which involved a vast deal more), would be then undertaken. Moreover, had the Royal Commissioners so acted, it would have been no "small degree" of excess of authority, but a monstrous breach of the law under which they were sitting in judgment, as well as of the most obvious dictates of policy and humanity. You yourself, Vindicator, elsewhere admit, that those very Commissioners were inclined to be lenient

[1] But who hath said it? Both the Penninghame Kirk-Session and Wodrow; and according to the minister of Glasserton's own argument, that *proves it.*

and merciful beyond the orders of the Privy Council.[1] But they committed a "slight mistake" in taking a child for a woman? Upon what principle of consistency and legitimate argument can you be heard to *assume* that to be a *mistake* which your own martyrologist not only sets down as a fact, but insists upon as a salient point of cruelty in the case? You are committing an infidelity against the historian to whom you are wedded. The Penninghame record says, she was *just* thirteen. Wodrow, improving upon that, says she was *not* thirteen. You now *assume*, for the nonce, that she was *more* than thirteen,—by just so many years as may best suit your present argument. But I must finish the quotation of your note:—

"It should be borne in mind, however, that the curates had been required to give in lists of all the 'disorderly' above *twelve* years of age, so that it need excite no surprise to find that, when Margaret Wilson, who evidently had been 'active in the' proscribed 'courses in a signal manner,' was placed at the bar, her youngest sister, who *doubtless* had been reported along with her as 'disorderly' by Mr Colquhoun, should have been tried with her, even though only *thirteen or so*. That no *formal reprieve* of Agnes Wilson has been found, is no proof that she was not sentenced with the others. It is rather a proof of the story told of her, that she was released on her father's bond, which bond was forfeited and paid."[2]

Oh! Glasserton, Glasserton, it is weary, dreary work, to track you through all this logic. If they were all *condemned* together, would the child have been omitted in the reprieve of the other two (one of them being her own sister), unless specially reserved for the sacrifice? You have assumed her womanhood, in the teeth of your own infallible authorities. But pray explain how it happened, that the Privy Council bestowed a free pardon upon the elder sister, but mulct the younger in the great sum of *a hundred pounds sterling*, for not coming to be drowned? And are you not aware that the "Cloud of Witnesses," published in 1714, gives a totally different version of the falsehood about the child? It is there set down (and Wodrow had that authority in his hand while recording the Penninghame version), that, immediately after the capture of the *three* martyrs, and before they were arraigned at Wigtown, the young

[1] See before, p. lv.

[2] Be it observed, that there is not a vestige of evidence for the whole of this, except the Penninghame record itself.

sister, Agnes, "was *dismissed*, as being but *fifteen* years of age, upon her father paying a *hundred pounds sterling* for her ransom,"[1]—of which latter fact there is not the slightest evidence on record.

If gravestones, and cemetery monuments, chiselled and composed long after the event, are to be quoted as proving the truth of it, then must we believe that the child *Agnes* was not only condemned, but *actually drowned*. In a certain cemetery at Stirling, a mendacious monument to a mythical martyrdom has been recently erected, with as little regard for justice as for truth. In the group of the drowned, little Saint Agnes and her sister are conspicuous; but old Saint Margaret finds no place. This lie in marble, being only a white lie, fears not to look heaven in the face. The following amusing comments upon it appeared in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, in an able article reviewing our own labours in the cause of the truth of History. The name of the author, were I permitted to disclose it, would greatly enhance the value of the review.

"We cannot take leave of Mr Napier, without thanking him for his labours in the cause of historic truth. We are convinced that the fruits of them will appear in after histories of Scotland; but the present generation must die out before the believers in the martyrs of the Blednoch will entirely disappear. There is a monumental *pillar* of some kind, we believe, on the banks of that stream, which for some time longer will probably do what Pope says the London monument does. A more absurd monument, inscribed to '*Margaret, martyr of the ocean wave, and her like-minded sister Agnes*,'—representing two girls (with an angel) presiding over a drinking fountain, we lately noticed amongst the dumpy effigies of Covenanters wherewith an opulent tradesman, with the best of motives and the worst of taste, has disfigured the beautiful churchyard on the castle rock of Stirling.[2] We would remark, that this commemoration of *Agnes* Wilson, *who is not alleged to have been drowned*, to the neglect of old Margaret Lauchlison, *asserted to have suffered*, is very unfair, and we hope the injustice may be rectified. Amongst so many grim statuettes, one old woman more will do no appreciable harm. We rather like the maintenance of memorials of *mythical martyrdoms*, as it may tend to cast ridicule upon, and therefore to check, the present mania both for *Monuments* and *Martyrs*."

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[1] See "Case for the Crown," pp. 126-7. The "Cloud of Witnesses" calls Margaret Wilson (Wodrow and Lord Macaulay's "maiden of eighteen") "a young woman of *scarce twenty-three years* of age."

[2] See the frontispiece to this edition of the "Case for the Crown."

But, reverend Sir, in this matter, also, your notes and your text are at variance—like the foolish game-cocks, who, forgetting they were on the same side of the main, proceeded to demolish each other. From over anxiety to demolish the audacious champion of Dundee, you laboriously maintain, in that note which figures at the foot of page 19 of your Vindication,—entirely based upon the authority of the minister and kirk-session of Penningham, published by Wodrow,—that a female child of thirteen, who by no possibility could have been guilty of a crime against the State, was nevertheless submitted, upon that high charge, to the verdict of a jury, before a Royal Commission of Justiciary, found guilty, and condemned to die. Lapsing, however, into common sense on the subject, you, in a subsequent page, tacitly but distinctly reject that monstrous fabrication, although perpetrated by the very kirk-session whose infallibility you would force upon History, by way of vindicating her! But hereby hangs another "beautiful old story," with which we must edify and enliven our readers.

Bailie M'Keand's "Grief of Heart."

One good effect of "Memorials of Dundee" was to set all wits to work, in the locality of the dethroned martyrs, to discover some new evidence that would restore to them their time-honoured crowns. These researches, anxiously prosecuted throughout a series of years, have proved, as indeed was to be expected from the nature of the proof already produced, despairingly unsuccessful. The only additional evidence discovered is a mere scrap of a parish record, quite consistent, so far as it goes, with the true story, but affording no support whatever to the fabulous martyrdom. The merit of the discovery appears to belong to a correspondent of the *Dumfries and Galloway Herald*, who, in some very judicious remarks on the case, comes to the conclusion that the only bearing of this new evidence is against the truth of the martyrdom.

The first administration of the sacrament in Wigtown, after the advent of King William, would seem to have taken place in 1704; and all who have dipt into the records of the kirk-sessions and presbyteries of that triumphant crisis of covenant-

ing intolerance in "rabbled" Scotland, will know the sort of tyranny which was apt to be exercised in admitting to the privileges of the Kirk, and which for a long time continued to oppress the priest-ridden country. We have not far to seek for an illustration, though a very mild one. At page 54 of "History Vindicated" we are favoured with the following:—

"The old Session-book of Wigtown shows that, in 1723, a number of the *people of Wigtown* were called before the Session because (the meeting of the Presbytery falling on a *New-year's day*) they went forth of the town to a 'public shooting, and ordered the drum to go through the town as the last bell was ringing in order to sermon, which was very displeasing to the Presbytery when meeting, being a remarkable contempt of the ordinances of God.' Most of the offenders were penitent, and promised better behaviour; but the drummer said,—'*He behoved to beat the drum when he was commanded*,'—and appeared to have very little sense of the scandal he had given; so he was in the meantime suspended from church privileges."

Three cheers for the *wapinschaw* drummer. Had he beat his drum, not against the "drum ecclesiastic," but contumaciously at the door of the late Privy Council, and been put in the stocks for it, Mas John Wodrow would have cooked it into a "Suffering." This drummer, who would have been *nuts* to the author of Old Mortality, evinced a spirit, and good sense indicating that he knew better how to "fear God and honour the king" than a Wigtown kirk-session was likely to teach him. But to our story.

In 1704, a Wigtown bailie, of a different kidney it would seem from the Wigtown drummer of 1723, was constrained to enact the following farce of conscience before the kirk-session, as is proved by their minute-book of the period. We give it here *verbatim et literatim*.

"At Wigtown, July 8th, 1704.

"Post preces sedt. The minr., all ye elders and deacons. This day the tokens were distributed to these in the congregatn., according to the mind of the Session the former day.

"This day Baillie M'Keand, elder, in Wigtown, addressed the Session for ye priviledge of the Sacrament, declaring the *grief of his heart* yt he should have sitten on ye sieze of *these women*, who *were sentenced to die* in this place in the year 1685; and yt it had been frequently his petition to God for true repentance and forgiveness for yt sin. He being removed, and the Session *enquiring into this affair*, and the carriage of the sd Baillie since yt time, and being satisfied with his conversatn. since,

and the present evidence of repentance now, they granted him the privilege; he was called in, admonished and exhorted to deliberation [*and?*] due tenderness in such a solemn address unto God.

"Sederunt closed with prayer."

The correspondent of the local paper in which this *morceau* was first published, points out, that the very meager and apathetic character of this reference to an incident so dramatically exciting as the alleged public drowning of these two saintly females, minuted, moreover, in such a record as the Wigtown session-book of 1704, is altogether incompatible with the idea of any such catastrophe having occurred. But a still more important fact, to that same effect, is to be gathered from this new scrap of evidence than the contributor appears to have observed. We have actually here the testimony, to a certain extent, of one of the jury who sat on the trial of these Wigtown women; and irrespective of his silence on the subject of any such terrible sacrifice having consummated their verdict, his testimony goes to prove, beyond all rational doubt, that, as regards one very interesting section of the voluminous romance of the Wigtown martyrs, both the Penninghame and Wodrow narratives are *absolutely false.*

Bailie M'Keand's "grief of heart" is declared by himself to be, that he had "sitten on the assize of *these women* who were sentenced to die in this place in the year 1685." But where was his grief of heart for having found,—contrary to his oath of assize, contrary to the special law applicable to the particular case, contrary to the most obvious principles of humanity and common sense,—that a female child, "not thirteen years," was guilty of high treason, and that, too, under a very special law, which expressly exempted all who had not entered their seventeenth year? Wodrow, with whom it was a principle of religion, as well as of the peculiar duty which he had undertaken at the earnest instigation of the kirk judicatories, never to question a story which happened to suit his "Sufferings," at once gave implicit credence to this impossibility. But have we not here the evidence of one of the jury, that such lawless and senseless inhumanity never occurred? For surely it cannot be maintained, that when the conscience of this Wigtown bailie was thus brought to the Confessional, he meant, when

speaking of "these women," tacitly to include the child? His conscience being so very sensitive, had a female child, also, been "sentenced to die," would *her* sufferings not have stood uppermost in his mind, or at least have weighed heavily on his conscience? Is this not evidence, that Wodrow's "unaccountable thing," as he himself calls it, is accounted for by a falsehood? Is this not evidence, coinciding with all probability, that the Penninghame romance of the child Agnes Wilson,—whose modern *monumental* martyrdom disfigures the beautiful Churchyard of the Castle-rock of Stirling, vexing the "lofty brow of ancient Keir," where taste in art, and truth in history, have their most cherished dwelling,—is utterly untrue? And can so circumstantial a calumny as this hope to escape under the disguise of such mystical verbiage as the Principal of a College, in his mistaken zeal to uphold a romance of fanaticism degrading to Scotland, condescends to employ, when he speaks of traditional *truth*, (as he *conjectures* this Wigtown martyrdom substantially to be), having "become impregnated in its descent by the *imaginative fertility* of the *consciousness of the time*, and still more of the immediately succeeding time, *which learns* to look back with a reverend wonder and love to the tragic events which made heroic the former days"![1] Decorative, but dim, it is not easy to see light through this ornate pane. We rub our eyes and ask,—Can it be a long word for lying?

But whatever it may mean, we cannot suppose Dr Tulloch to have intended it as a touchstone for eliminating any of the *essentials* of this martyrological romance, to the effect of saving the martyrdom. Adopting what he calls "the current tradition of the story," which just means the long story handed by the minister of Penninghame to Wodrow (for it was not current, or ever heard of before, in the shape of a story), the Principal proceeds to narrate, in reference to the children of Gilbert Wilson,—"At length two of the children fell into the hands of the *persecutors*—two daughters, Margaret and Agnes—the former eighteen, the latter only thirteen years of age, and both it is alleged, in the current edition of the

[1] "The Wigtown Martyrs: A story of the Covenant in 1685. By the Rev. Principal Tulloch." Macmillan's Magazine for December, 1862, p. 149.

story, were condemned to death, although the youngest was spared, at the intercession of her father." This "unaccountable thing" the Principal of St Andrews does not attempt to account for. But in thus giving additional currency to it, *does he believe it?* If he does not, the Principal should have said so. There was an obstacle, however, to his being explicit. It would be out of all reason to refer that essential limb of the story to his saving clause of "embellishments" and "*natural* developments,"—mere parasites accumulated on a venerable stem of truth,—but, in this instance, the growth of a period of time much too short for his ingenious theory, being only from 1685 to 1710. What then? Why, if the Principal ventured to give up the truth of that narrative about the child,—an essential portion of the whole story,—he would be wrecked on the breakers of this, his own dogma. "It is clear that the *only* alternative is between the truth of the story and the lying invention of it: Its embellishments, as told by Wodrow, are *natural* developments,—*supposing* a basis of fact granted." We accept the alternative. We maintain "the lying invention" of that story about the child Agnes Wilson. And the Penninghame kirk-session minutes being convicted of that lie, we insist for "the lying invention" of the whole romance. If there be any truth or sense at all in the maxim, *falsum in uno falsum in omnibus*, it must apply here. And the only "basis of fact granted" is, that the "two women" were *condemned* to be drowned, for refusing, *coram publico*, and in the face of one of the highest judicial tribunals, the universal Government test of the abjuration of Cameron and Renwick's murderous proclamations;[1] that they were

[1] We trace the origin of this famous "Oath of Abjuration" (of a *Fenianism* far more murderous than what has disturbed Government in the present day), in a letter from Sir George Mackenzie of Tarbat, Lord Clerk Register, to the Prime Minister, Queensberry, dated 10th November 1684. He writes,—"This day, the Secret Committee have met, on occasion of a paper affixt on the Cross of Linlithgow, *declaring war* with the Government, and promising to *kill us all*. . . . . Since we find that there is a party *declaring a war*, who *lurk within us*, we think on a *strict enquiry*, for *all in the nation*, who will not *forswear these* opinions; and especially in Edinburgh; and at any rate to free the Kingdom of all of them." *Buccleuch Papers.* See *Memorials of Dundee*, pp. 422-425.

allowed a long time to recant their ignorant and misguided infatuation; and that, having recanted, they received a free pardon from the Government of Scotland, as a matter of course.

But the learned Principal chooses to adopt the other limb of his alternative. He says,—"Upon the whole, and in the face of the difficulties which the story presents, we incline to believe it, and will shortly state the grounds of our faith." And what is his main ground? An *assumption* of the infallibility of certain parochial officials,—men of a very narrow sphere and humble status,—of whose individual conduct, characters, and consciences, the Principal is, in reality, profoundly ignorant. Yet he pronounces, *é cathedra*, "The kirk-sessions of Penninghame and Kirkinner"—who, be it remembered, differ *essentially* in their stories,—"were composed of a number of *grave and respected men*, who, whatever may have been their prejudices, would have shrunk from a falsehood with abhorrence. We are not bound to trust their judgment, nor even reverence their faith; but to suppose that these men wilfully imposed upon posterity a fiction (and if the story was a fiction, *they must have known it*) is simply *incredible.*" And so, adds this inexorable logician, "*it is clear* that the only alternative is between the truth of the story and the *lying invention* of it."

Alas! very reverend Sir, this is a cruel defence. Does your logic not apply with equal force to the circumstantial story we have been considering, of the trial and condemnation of the child Agnes Wilson, transferred from the Penninghame session-book of 1711 into the greedy pages of Wodrow in 1722? And is there not proof, of the most undeniable character, that *that* story, at least, is a malicious falsehood? Unsupported by a single circumstance of proof that can be discovered in the records of Government, is it not expressly *disproved* by the most unscrupulous of conventicle compilations, the "Cloud of Witnesses," where we are told, that, before any trial took place, the child "*was dismissed*, as being *but fifteen years of age*"? And have we not now the testimony of Bailie M'Keand, one of the jury, importing that no child whatever was upon that occasion submitted to their verdict? Can we be asked, then, to hold that part of the story, also, a mere "*natural* embellishment,"—in order to save these Westland kirk-sessionists

from the limbo of liars? This, very reverend Sir, is your own fiat for them. But will you allow these unfortunate parochial worthies no loop-hole of escape? Will you leave them no merciful argument of erring humanity, or of intellects at once feeble and fanatical? No theory, of judgments perverted, imaginations excited, by martyr predilections, and mother-milk? Is it not permitted even to suppose, that some one unknown libeller of the school of Alexander Shields had misled all the rest? When men whose zeal (as you say of them) exceeds their judgment, and whose *faith* is "not to be reverenced," are very anxious to discover, they are very willing to be deceived. And who, in a collective capacity, is always chary of his individual truth? Has it not passed into a proverb, that a corporate body has neither a soul to be saved, nor a *corpus* to be kicked? But, if all this, according to your own stern estimate of the state of the question, will not entitle your poor Kirkinner and Penninghame brethren to a verdict of false, with extenuating circumstances—where, Primarius Professor, where is the triumph of your argument?

> "Let Wisdom smile not on her conquered field,
> No truth is saved, no triumph is revealed,—
> Oh! let her read nor loudly, nor elate,
> The doom that bars them from a better fate,
> But, sad as angels for the good man's sin,
> Weep to record, and blush to give it in."

Neither can you, Vindicator of History, be heard to maintain in a *note* what you repudiate in your *text*. For, in this last, you yourself understand the statement of Bailie M'Keand to import, that *no child* was either tried or condemned upon the occasion when the two women were sentenced.. But you shall speak for yourself.

"It may be imagined that Bailie M'Keand's 'grief of heart' would not have been so great as it appears to have been, and that he would not have been denied the 'privilege of the sacrament' for nineteen years, had the women, at whose condemnation to death he assisted, not been actually executed. But others may think that to sentence *two women* to death for not swearing an oath which their conscience would not allow them to swear, was *in itself* sin enough to call for a very deep repentance. The fact in question cannot be with perfect certainty inferred from Bailie M'Keand's penitence;—though most readers, we think, will be

inclined to come to the conclusion that the mere circumstance of his having acted—perhaps very unwillingly—as one of a jury of three who pronounced a sentence of death which was never carried into execution, would not, after the lapse of nineteen years, have lain so very heavy on his conscience, and that, if he had been *chargeable with no greater crime*, he might reasonably enough have complained that *he* should be subjected to discipline for such an offence, when Provost Coltran, who had been somewhat active in fining and imprisoning the Presbyterians, should not merely be unchallenged, but should actually sit as one of his judges."—(*Hist. Vind.* p. 56.)

But, reverend Sir, if the Penninghame kirk-session, and your idol Wodrow, have not recorded a falsehood, this juryman *was* "chargeable with a greater crime." In your own *note* (p. 19) you insist that he was chargeable with the greater crime of finding that *child* guilty of high treason, whereby she was doomed to death, a fact that would have rendered his grief of heart somewhat more intelligible. But the terms of his own confession, quoted by yourself (p. 55), are *conclusive* against the fact. He only speaks of "the women" condemned; and you yourself, in your text above quoted, read that to mean no more than "the *two* women." Nay, you say the same in another *note*, (p. 26), (quite at variance with the former, p. 19), as follows:—"We learn from the old Wigtown Session-book recently found, that when, in 1708, [1704], Bailie M'Keand of Wigtown appeared before the kirk-session to profess repentance for having 'sitten on the size' when the *two women* were condemned to die, the Provost was one of the members of session present." But what of the *child*, reverend Sir, for disbelieving the fable of whose trial and death-doom you thus chide me,—"Mr Napier would rather believe that a kirk-session could record a wilful and easily detected falsehood than that a royal commission could exceed their authority in the *smallest degree*, or even commit the *slight mistake* of considering a child *somewhat older* than she actually was." That this High Court of Justiciary, in short, who were most unwilling to have anything to do with disorderly women, and had special instructions from the Privy Council not to take such in hand at all, unless highly and obtrusively criminal, had, in their cruel zeal, mistaken a child for a woman, although her elder sister,—the "maiden of eighteen," as Wodrow and Lord Macaulay have it,

but who was a woman about twenty-three, as the "Cloud of Witnesses" informs us,—was at the bar beside the child, to tell her age if necessary! Oh! Glasserton, is this your logic? In your haste to vindicate History, you have cast yourself on the horns of a sad dilemma. That *note* in which you rate me so roundly for my want of faith in a story *impossible to have happened*, dogmatically ties you to the falsehood. But your *text* commits you even more cruelly, for it has unintentionally blundered into the truth.

Then, in reference to this same sederunt on Bailie M'Keand's "grief of heart," you add the following remarks, which, we agree with yourself, "deserve especial notice." The italics are your own.

"What deserves especial notice in this session minute, however, is, *the men who sat along with Mr Ker in session when this case was before them;* men who must have known the whole truth of the case in question, and who must have made Mr Ker fully acquainted with it. A very strangely constituted man must Mr Ker have been if he admonished his penitent parishioner without asking what was the actual issue of the case which occasioned his 'grief of heart.' There is no difficulty in discovering who were the members of Wigtown Session at that time; and the minute assures us they were *all* present.

"Those, therefore, who sat in Session with Mr Ker, when Bailie M'Keand senior came before them, were the following:—

"1. *William Coltrane* of Drummoral, provost of Wigtown. No one will doubt *his* knowledge of the fact in question.

"2. *John Lafries*, bailie of Wigtown. He is on the roll of the Synod of Galloway, 19th April 1692. He died (between 15th June and 22d July 1711) after the Presbytery had received the Kirkinner and Penninghame statements.

"3. *John M'Keand* younger, bailie of Wigtown. Ordained before 1701, and died in 1711, after the accounts of the martyrdom were given in to the Presbytery.

"4. *Thomas M'Clelland* (tenant in Carlae). On the roll of the Synod, 16th October 1694, and his name appears in the session minutes till 1709.

"5. *Thomas M'Cleur.* He was an elder before 1701, and his name is in the session minutes till 1715.

"6. *Patrick M'Kie* of Achleand, ordained 8th March 1702. He was an heritor in the parish of Wigtown.

"7. *David M'Kie* of Maidland, ordained 8th March 1792. He was an heritor, whose land was close to Wigtown, and whose residence, as appears from the minute-book, was in the burgh. He was a member of session till 1722.

" Besides the above elders, there were also present the following deacons:—Michael Shanks, John Calzie, John Carson (all ordained before 1701), John Kevan and William Gibson (ordained 1702).

" It cannot be doubted that Mr Ker obtained most reliable testimony as to the actual fate of the 'two women sentenced to die,' when *the affair was inquired into*, in a meeting of twelve Wigtown men,—most of whom, it is perfectly certain, were living there and grown up at the time of the occurrence in question."—(*Hist. Vind.*, pp. 56, 57).

Valuable statistics. But the reasoning is not so satisfactory. Why, " the men who sat along with Mr Ker in session when this case was before them " as good as tell us themselves, that all they knew about the matter was just what Bailie M'Keand referred to,—namely, that the two women had been " *sentenced to die.*" Nor did the session seem to be quite ripe upon that. For, " he (the penitent) being removed, and the session *enquiring* into *this affair*," &c., granted him the privileges of the kirk. " A very strangely constituted man,"—says Vindicator,—" must Mr Ker have been, *if* he admonished his penitent parishioner without *asking* what was the *actual issue of the case* which occasioned his grief of heart." A very strangely constituted reasoner is our reverend opponent. His postulate, and a most peremptory one, is, that the reverend Mr Ker *knew* the whole story, from beginning to end, of the Wigtown martyrdom, as we have it in Wodrow, as well as he knew his Bible. He assumes, and *insists*, that this minister was on the most familiar terms with parishioners of his own who (he says) must have been eye-witnesses of the martyrdom. He tells us,—" it is *not possible* that he (Mr Ker) could be ignorant of what was really the fate of the two women. He was ordained minister of Wigtown on the 4th March 1701, not quite sixteen years after the execution is said to have taken place. He must have been in daily communication with his parishioners, who must have been *witnesses* of it,—*if it was a fact*," (p. 55). Then, would he not rather have been a " strangely constituted man " had he put the question, in 1704, to his own penitent parishioner,—" what was the *actual issue* of the case," meaning, the issue of the sentence of death? But what if the alleged issue was *not* a fact? What if Bailie M'Keand, like the needy knife-grinder, had no such story to tell them? Is that not the most rational mode of escape, from the alterna-

tive of supposing that this was a whole session of "strangely constituted men"? And is it not perfectly manifest, from the record itself, that neither the minister nor any of the rest, including the culprit himself, had raised any discussion whatever upon "the actual issue of the case." Surely the only legitimate conclusion from such evidence is, that the terrible catastrophe, so full of harrowing details, which were *collected*, and *cooked*, for the *first time*, four or five years afterwards, dwelt not, at that time, on any one of their minds. Why? Because it never occurred. The nearer we approach the alleged date of this marvellous martyrdom, the more shadowy and ghost-like it becomes, until it actually dies away altogether in a *ghost story*, just when the evidence of its reality ought to be most tangible. Very strangely constituted men, indeed, must the whole of these kirk-sessionists have been, *if* with the full knowledge of all those heart-rending details,—which have crowned the "Wigtown Martyrs" with eternal glory, thrown the history of Scotland into mourning, and tricked her shield with humiliating tears,—they had thus shewn themselves so little interested, so little disposed to preserve and perpetuate the memory of what as yet had received no record, and as apathetic withal on the subject of the deepest of national tragedies, and the greatest of national crimes, as if they had been the seven sleepers,—always, as Vindicator says,—"*if it was a fact.*"

It would be unjust, however, to ignore the minister of Glasserton's most formidable argument, which, indeed, he considers invincible. He tells us (p. 57),—"In a subsequent minute of the Wigtown Session, 23d January 1708, all the members being present, it appears that Mr Ker laid before the session reasons which he had drawn up for holding a parochial fast, which reasons were approved of, and recorded, and the fast appointed to be held." Our author proceeds to quote the Reverend Mr Ker's reasons, as thus by himself expressed:—"The persecuting, imprisoning, racking, shooting, hanging, drowning, beheading, and banishing at pleasure such as adhered to the truths of God, reformation, and covenants, and refused to prostitute their tender consciences by conformity to the common courses of the times;" and then comes Vindica-

tor's home-thrust,—"It thus appears that Mr Ker and the elders of Wigtown included '*drowning*' in the list of the sins of the late unhappy times that had still to be laid to heart and mourned over. *How* could they have done so, had *the only persons sentenced to that death never suffered it*"? How? By *lying*, sure. There's the answer. And thanks, reverend Sir, for your admission that, "except the two women in question, *it is not said* that any other was put to death by drowning" (p. 58). But your Wigtown witnesses have never even said that *these two women* were put to death by drowning. *Dolus latet in generalibus.* It is just the *old conventicle* and *conventional cry* repeated, *ipsissimis verbis*, from the virulent and unscrupulous catalogue of pamphleteering agitators on the eve of the Orange invasion, of whom the chief scribe and pharisee was Alexander Shields. And what foundation was there for it? Why, the humane instruction, issued in the reign of Charles II., that disorderly *women* were not to be meddled with unless they *compelled* a conviction for treason, in which case they were only to be drowned, not hanged and dismembered. And accordingly (as I have already proved), it was Charles II. whom these pamphleteers at first accused of the "drowning of women;" whereas the *Wigtown Martyrs*,—"the only persons sentenced to that death,"—were sentenced in the reign of James II.[1] And thus indeed, "the only persons sentenced to that death *never* suffered it," for they received,—I quote the words of Wodrow when half brought to his senses on the subject by a most untoward discovery, which, moreover, he half concealed,—a "*material pardon.*"

And here, Vindicator of History, let me put a question or two to yourself. Was or was not the Reverend Mr Ker of Wigtown ignorant of that "material pardon" which the Privy Council of Scotland recorded in favour of these women on the 30th of April 1685? Was he or was he not aware of what you yourself admit, in these words,—"*There is no doubt* that the petitions in favour of the two women obtained for them, on the 30th of April, a reprieve of the Privy Council in the

[1] See *supra*, pp. xciii., xciv.

form subjoined"? And the form you subjoin is that *full verbatim form* of the "material pardon" which was first brought to light in "Memorials of Dundee." For, be it observed, it was left to myself to redeem the official record of that pardon from the *suppressio veri* of one martyrological clergyman, and the *allegatio falsi* of another,—of which *anon*. The "reasons for a fast," tabled by the Reverend Mr Ker, accuses the *late persecuting Government*, without any qualification whatever, of "drowning," *inter alia*, as one of the sinful characteristics of their tyrannical rule; and you, Vindicator, say that *must* mean these two women, as there was not another woman so sentenced. But did or did not Mr Ker and his compeers know that this merciless Government *pardoned* these two women, upon the prayer of their *own petitions* (the original of one of which has been recently discovered),[1] intreating to be allowed to take the Oath of Abjuration, which they had refused, and to be spared to live loyally in future? If Mr Ker did *not* know all this, his "reasons" were based on ignorance; if he *did*, they were based on falsehood. And let me apply the same *experimentum crucis* to Wodrow's prompters, the Penninghame kirk-session. Were they, too, as unconscious as himself of that "material pardon"? You, reverend Sir, are as inexorable in your alternative as the Principal of St Andrews. You insist that they *must* or *might* have been eye-witnesses of the martyrdom. But did they or did they not know of the *peccavi* and the *pardon?* If Wodrow's Penninghame prompters knew these facts, and withheld them from their martyrologist-in-chief,—who himself tells us, that he did *not* know these facts until after the death of the Penninghame minister,—they are *false* witnesses. If they themselves did not know them, they are *ignorant* witnesses. Take your choice, Martyrologists.

But, reverend Sir, you have got the minister of Penninghame into as great a scrape as yourself. You have landed him, too, on the horns of a dilemma enough to cause Penning-

[1] See page 17 of "Case for the Crown," "The humble supplication of *Margaret Lachlisone*, now prisoner in the Tolbuith of Wigton," addressed to the Lords of the Privy Council.

hame to cry, from out the tomb, to Glasserton,—"save me from my friends." You say,—

"It is *morally certain* that Mr Rowan was not long settled in Penninghame till he heard Margaret Wilson's history from the lips of her parents; and *they* surely knew whether she was executed according to her sentence, or whether, being pardoned, she returned to her home. And in 1711, when *Mr Rowan drew up the minute of sufferings*, though Gilbert Wilson was dead, his widow was still alive, as was their son Thomas, who had succeeded his father in the farm of Glenvernock. From them, doubtless, the minister received the account of the sufferings of their family, and the minute details of Margaret's cruel death; for he points to Thomas Wilson as his chief authority, when he says that 'he lives to certify the truth of these things.'"—(*Hist. Vind.* p. 51.)

The whole argument of "History Vindicated" is made up of "*ifs*," and "*ans*," and assumed "*musts*," and "*moral certainties*," against an overwhelming mass of proof entirely ignored. But it is *not* "morally certain that Mr Rowan was not long settled in Penninghame till he heard Margaret Wilson's history from the lips of her parents." There is no certainty about it; and Mr Rowan does not say so. Nay, what he does say is tantamount to a contradiction of Vindicator's "moral certainty." For he only ventures to say that Thomas Wilson, to whom he "*points* as his chief authority," is a witness who "*lives* to certify the truth of these things,"—his parents being dead. But, unfortunately, this important testimony *non est inventus;* and in point of fact, Thomas Wilson never did certify anything on the subject *all his life.*[1] This, however, may be granted, as morally certain, that Margaret

[1] Our author adds, with greater *naïveté* than accuracy, "It *may be* that he was never called upon to certify anything regarding his sister's death, after her story was published, *just because no one in his day ventured to call that fact in question:* Mr Napier has intimated what value *he* would put on any attestation by this 'Orange rebel;' had he 'actually attested the fate of his sister, as narrated by the martyrologist, it would just come to this, that Thomas Wilson had attested for truth that which is *proved to be false*, as did the kirk-sessions of Kirkinner and Penninghame.'—*Case for the Crown*, p. 105." Now, Vindicator, does not Wodrow tell us,—"the advocates for the cruelty of this period have the *impudence to deny*" the whole story of the Wigtown Martyrs; and does not Patrick the Chapman say of the same,—"which some *deny to be matter of fact*"? (See *supra*, pp. xxix., xxxi.) As for the quotation from myself, I own, and

Wilson's parents "knew whether she was executed *according to her sentence*, or whether, *being pardoned*, she returned to her home." And there is another moral certainty, reverend Sir, not very convenient for your argument. If the Reverend Robert Rowan heard the whole history of these Wigtown Martyrs from the lips of their parents, and they told him *the truth*, he *must* have learnt, that, upon their own *petitions* and *peccavi*, these convicts received from the Privy Council of Scotland, on the 30th of April 1685, a "material pardon." Now, when "Mr Rowan drew up the minute of sufferings" not the slightest allusion did he make, either to petitions or pardon! But these are *essential facts* in the history of the case; and they are facts *unquestionably proved*, whatever may have become of these obscure and utterly insignificant women afterwards. What then? *Either* the Reverend Robert Rowan,—assuming the "moral certainty" of his having the story from the lips of the sufferers' parents,—had allowed himself to be grossly imposed upon in his political researches for sufferings, *or*, he himself had grossly imposed upon the cat-witted Wodrow, and upon that History, which you, her Vindicator, say, cannot stand if Wodrow fall! In this last case, according to your own postulate as to the facts, the minister of Penninghame must have been guilty of a flagrant *suppressio veri*. Nor is that all. It being *proved*, by the testimony both of the "Cloud of Witnesses" and Bailie M'Keand, that *Agnes* Wilson was neither condemned nor tried, the story of that child, drawn up by the minister of Penninghame, is a still more flagrant commission of the *allegatio falsi*. Take your choice, Vindicator of History.

But we are not yet done with "what deserves especial notice," —as you say, reverend Sir,—namely, "the men who sat along with Mr Ker in Session when this case (of Bailie M'Keand) was before them." That the Wigtown minutes recently discovered contain all that passed, upon the occasion in question, relative to the two women "sentenced to die in this place in 1685," cannot be questioned. It would be preposterous to

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am proud of the reference. This Thomas Wilson was alive in 1734, and never testified, either of himself or through Wodrow.

suppose, that "the *issue*" of the capital sentence could have been at all ventilated at that sederunt without entering their minutes. Could they possibly have omitted to record that which would have been by far the most important part of the occurrence otherwise so feebly mooted,—the deep tragedy of the sequel,—had that been discussed, or alluded to at all? For would it not have been the real illustration, and rational explanation, of Bailie M'Keand's "grief of heart"? And you yourself think so, reverend Sir. For, in that conjectural and somewhat confused commentary above quoted, in which you vacillate with such uncertainty between one idea and another, you are still aiming at the untenable and unwarrantable assumption, that this penitent bailie had really founded the grief of his heart upon the fact of a human sacrifice the most affecting and dramatic that history ever recorded, although not a word about it appears in the record of his agony! Now, one of the members of Session, at that sederunt, was the Provost of Wigtown, William Coltran of Drummoral! You say emphatically, Vindicator, and truly,—"no one will doubt *his* knowledge of the fact in question." In his custody, as chief magistrate of Wigtown, and at his responsibility, the High Commissioners of Justiciary, who sentenced these female convicts to die, had consigned them to the tolbooth of Wigtown. If they suffered death there in pursuance of their sentence, it must have been under the authority and superintendence of the chief magistrate of the burgh. And, accordingly, that is the fanatical version of "the affair." For we have it on the high authority of the traditional lore of Sir Andrew Agnew,—who is very severe upon myself for discrowning the "Wigtown Martyrs," and whom possibly he may yet represent in Parliament under a further and fairer extension of the representation of Scotland,—how a "*town-officer, a sergeant*, who was an active party at the execution, helped to raise up the half-drowned women, to receive a useless offer of the test, and that on their refusal he pressed their heads down again with *his halbert*, crying, with savage glee, '*There, tak another drink o't, my hearties.*' He returned *safe* from the *murderous job*, but troubled by an extraordinary thirst: he

drank, but his thirst was unquenchable,"—for ever![1] If this be true,—and the *Kirkinner* version of the martyrdom also has it, that "*Margaret Lachlison* was, *according to the said sentence*, fixed to the stake till the tide made, and *held down within the water by one of the town officers, by his halbert at her throat*, till she died,"—it must be presumed that the *Provost of the Burgh*, whose chief officer, armed with the insignia of the town guard, acted as executioner, was himself the responsible and presiding authority. And such, too, was Wodrow's belief, founded on a *ghost story*, transmitted to him at *second hand*, in a correspondence with a brother martyrologist, on a very dubious narrative, and the most questionable authority.[2] Now, if this version of the martyrdom were true, it would require to be explained how Bailie M'Keand's grief of heart, for having been a *juryman*, could have been the topic at that kirk-session without occasioning the slightest reference to the conscious Provost sitting in judgment there, or extorting a remark from that chief of sinners in the murderous tragedy. We are not even told that Felix trembled. And how came it that he who was the most guilty in that terrible scene,—"if it was a fact,"—was not himself called to account before these guardians of the sacred privileges of the Kirk in Wigtown?

The answer has been furnished in our "Case for the Crown." There it has been proved, and proved to demonstration, that Provost Coltran was at the scene of the *pardon* in Edinburgh, and not of the *martyrdom* at Wigtown. In consequence of their own petitions to the Privy Council, these two obscure and insignificant women, whom no human being, from the highest to the lowest, desired to injure, far less to immolate, and whom the Government of Scotland were most anxious to be spared the necessity of executing, came to be removed from Wigtown, along with *other prisoners* who had been condemned under the same High Commission there, to Edinburgh Tolbooth, to have the Oath of Abjuration administered to them under the imme-

[1] "A History of the Hereditary Sheriffs of Galloway, by Sir Andrew Agnew, Bart., M.P." Of which more particularly afterwards.

[2] See "Case for the Crown," p. 112,—"An alibi proved for the Provost of Wigtown against the evidence of the Ghost of old Margaret Lauchlison."

diate authority of the Privy Council. This being done, their "material pardon" was recorded in the form of a reprieve *sine die*,—"And (the Privy Council) discharge the *Magistrates of Edinburgh* for putting of the said sentence to execution against them."[1] Now, where was the Provost of Wigtown, their original custodier, at this time? *Attending in his place in Parliament, at Edinburgh, as commissioner for his own royal burgh of Wigtown.* Can it be rationally doubted that he was in communication with the Lord Advocate, (whose name appears in the sederunt of the record of the pardon), on the subject of these poor penitent women, and with the women themselves? The whole mystery is solved. At the *séance* on Bailie M'Keand's conscience, there was no idea that any such tragedy had ensued upon the condemnation. In 1704, the Penninghame romance of 1711 was absolutely *unknown.* It had not yet been "*collected.*"[2] And Provost Coltran, whose con-

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[1] See "Case for the Crown," pp. 15 to 19.

[2] It is both instructive and amusing to compare the minister of Glasserton's account of Bailie M'Keand's affair with the following account of the *first collecting* of the grand romance of the "Wigtown Martyrs," in 1708, *four years after.*

"In the same year 1708, on the 19th October, the Synod of Galloway met at Wigtown; and in their minute of that date is given their *first recommendation* to the several Presbyteries in their bounds regarding this matter:—

"'The Synod, considering that there is a *design of writing a historie of the sufferings of this church under Episcopacie in the late tymes*, did therefore recommend to the several Presbyteries to get ane exact account of the sufferings of the late tymes in their bounds, and to bring them to next Synod; and appoints Messrs William Clark of Twynholm (ordained 1693)" &c.; "and *Thomas Ker of Wigtown* (ordained 1701), for the Presbytery of Wigtown," &c. Upon which we have the following comment from the author of "History Vindicated":—

"The fact that Mr Ker, minister of Wigtown, was appointed to this duty is not irrelevant, and may be kept in mind; for though the task laid upon the two brethren was not accomplished by them, Mr Ker was *probably led to make particular inquiry* into the case of the two women who had been condemned to be drowned at Wigtown in 1685." (See *Hist. Vind.*, pp. 39, 40.) Was there ever such confusion as this! So it would seem, after all, that *nothing* had occurred in 1704, when the kirk-session of Wigtown paused upon Bailie M'Keand's conscience, "*to inquire into the affair*," that had enlightened Mr Ker on the subject of the martyrdom, or caused him, at that time, to make particular inquiry into the case

science might well be clear on the subject, was not required to shrive himself, for he had neither been judge nor juryman in the case. The condemned had been removed from his custody and responsibility in Wigtown; and instead of superintending their execution within his burgh jurisdiction, he had been ministering to their *peccavi* and *pardon* in Edinburgh.[1]

The original calumny of the Wigtown Martyrs traced to Alexander Shields, and extinguished.

The testimony of Bailie M'Keand is also valuable, in respect of its aiding to extinguish the original edition of the Wigtown martyrdom, as that appeared for the first time in a very curt form in 1690. To trace its origin, and to extinguish it, is in itself tantamount to destroying the fable in all its mendacious phases. Undoubtedly the pamphlet in question is the *root* of the monster falsehood, the *Wellingtonia Gigantea* of the martyrdoms of Scotland, which was nourished into rankness (in two very different forms) in the parishes of Kirkinner and

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of the two women. The minister of Wigtown was *still uninformed*, and had been idle on this interesting and exciting subject, for *four years* after Bailie M'Keand's grief of heart!

[1] The minister of Glasserton is unable to resist the evidence, or to answer it, by which Provost Coltran is completely cleared, and the *ghost laid*, in our "Case for the Crown." But he admits it with the worst grace possible; still attempting to insinuate that the proof is doubted by others, with the most ludicrous affectation he *pretends to corroborate* what we have *demonstrated*. He says,—"Mr Napier endeavours to prove an *alibi* for the provost, and we think his proof on this point more satisfactory than his proofs generally are; and as we see *some think* he has failed to establish even this point, *we are glad* to add a 'corroboration' to his proof of the provost's innocence. We learn from the old Wigtown session-book, recently found, that when in 1708 [1704] Bailie M'Keand of Wigtown appeared before the kirk-session, to profess repentance for having 'sitten on the size' when the *two women* were condemned to die, the provost was one of the members of session present. He therefore was *most probably* free from that scandal for which his brother magistrate was doing penance."—(*Hist. Vind.*, p. 26.) But had the women been executed under his jurisdiction, and "held down within the water by one of the town officers, by his halbert at her throat, till she died," would the provost have been "free from that scandal"?

Penninghame, the focus of covenanting fanaticism. It was put forth anonymously, in the service of the "Society People," by one of their most zealous scribes, Alexander Shields, whose history is given in the "Case for the Crown." This was that same savage preacher, of a gospel of his own, who excited many poor and ignorant fanatics to imperil their lives by refusing the abjuration oath, and then swallowed it to save himself! Upon the testimony of this man, whom the minister of Glasserton admits to be the very first to whom an express and specific record of the Wigtown martyrdom can be traced,—a creature void of every property of a faithful and Christian chronicler,—History is thus professed to be vindicated in our own times:—

"In another pamphlet, also published by the Societies in 1690, and entitled *A Short Memorial of Sufferings and Grievances*, the Wigtown tragedy is *expressly* mentioned. '*Item*, the said Colonel and Lieutenant-General James Douglas, together with the Laird of Lag and Captain Winram, *most illegally* condemned, and *most inhumanly* drowned, at stakes within the sea-mark, two women at Wigtown, viz., Margaret Lachlan, upwards of sixty years, and Margaret Wilson, about twenty years of age,[1] the foresaid fatal year 1685.' Here, within five years after the event, the case of the Wigtown sufferers is *plainly given to the public*, and three of the agents concerned in their condemnation pointed out by name."—(*Hist. Vind.*, p. 33.)

But, Vindicator of History, can you explain how an event, and a scene, as dramatic and sensational as the *Colleen Bawn*, and as heart-rending, enacted, moreover, *coram publico*, at the very capital of westland whiggery, had never been narrated or alluded to by any of those irresponsible *framers of lists* of "Suf-

[1] As one of several more important circumstances indicating the ignorance of facts which pervades the gradual concoction of this martyrdom, it is not unimportant to observe the variety of ages assigned to the "virgin martyr," Margaret Wilson. The Penninghame kirk-session call her "a virgin martyr of eighteen years of age." The neighbouring Kirkinner version leave her out of the martyrdom altogether. Wodrow has it, "She died a virgin martyr, *about eighteen* years of age." The above first record (1690) of the martyrdom (without the story) calls her "*about twenty* years of age." The "Relation" of the martyrdom given in the fanatical compilation entitled "The Cloud of Witnesses" calls her a young woman of *scarce twenty-three* years of age." In Lord Macaulay's "History of England" she figures for ever as a "maiden of eighteen."

ferings and Grievances," transmitted to the Prince of Orange to encourage and hasten his advent between the years 1685 and 1688,—one of those lists *issuing from the very locality*, and containing an item of charge bearing the *very date* of the alleged martyrdom,—until the year 1690, by this Alexander Shields? And are we to believe that that notice by him is really and truly the *epitome* of a *perfect melodrama* of martyrdom, the most marvellous that history is acquainted with, thus shortly stated for the *first time* five years after the event, and never given to the public in its delectably tragical details until 1722, more than thirty years after that epitome of it, at which time it first came to be so richly endowed by the kirk-appointed martyrologist Wodrow,—"*impregnated* in its descent by the *imaginative fertility* of the consciousness of the time, and still more of the immediately succeeding time, which learns to look back with a reverent wonder and love to the tragic events which made heroic the former days,"—and to which *Katerfelto* is a joke? Tell us, reverend Sir, why it is that this Christian martyrdom, so public, so fearfully sensational, and so comparatively recent as the close of the seventeenth century, should yet be so obscure, so shrouded with mystery, so betrayed by Time, and forsaken by Truth, that the only historical record of it is that so foolishly "got up" in the eighteenth century as to be now confessedly convicted of at least a certain amount of falsehoods, admitted to be such even by some Presbyterian divines, who had hitherto relied like yourself upon its full and literal integrity? Tell us how it happens that the clerical champions of this remarkable romance are now compelled to fall back upon a broken and spurious *tradition*, which can only be equivocally traced up so far as to the very sect answerable for those admitted historical falsifications?

And again, reverend Sir: In this authority to which you so confidently refer, there is not the slightest allusion to the fact that these women did receive "a material pardon" (Wodrow's phrase) from the Privy Council of Scotland. Did Shields not know it? Or was it that he *did* know it? Take your choice. And did it never happen to strike yourself, as a very remarkable circumstance, that there is not a single record of the martyrdom, from this by the notorious author of "A Hind Let

Loose," in 1690, to the Kirkinner and Penninghame parochial romances of 1710 and 1711, which does not *absolutely ignore*—whether ignorantly or designedly matters not—the unquestionable fact, that these two women did receive that pardon?

But here I must correct myself. On further examination, I do find a curious passage in your Vindication, in which you endeavour to turn to the advantage of your argument a fact which makes dead against it. You gravely maintain that the *knowledge* of the women *having been reprieved* in that form which Wodrow calls "a material pardon," is just what *gave rise* to the *tradition* that they were *illegally executed!* Is this not somewhat jesuitical? You argue, that those sly dogs, the Penninghame kirk-session, were *quite aware* of this *Government* pardon, although they gave the Government no credit for it; and that, in framing their extraordinary romance, they *knew it and meant it*, although they said nothing about it,—which reminds us of Falstaff's happy turn when fairly caught,—"By the Lord *I knew ye*,—as well as he that made ye." You shall be judged, however, by your own words, italics and all:—

"There is no doubt that the petitions in favour of the two women obtained for them on the 30th April a reprieve by the Privy Council in the form subjoined. The existence of this reprieve is no recent discovery. Wodrow states that he had seen it, and gives it as *his opinion* that 'the people at Wigtown' (he means those who acted for the Government there) 'were deeply guilty, and had no power for what they did.' In this opinion he may be right, or he may be wrong; but at all events, the circumstance of a reprieve having been granted was enough to give rise to the tradition which has always prevailed,—that there was something illegal in the execution. The history of the execution given by Wodrow, on the authority of the Penninghame Session minute, *implies that there was a reprieve*, and that the Government officials at Wigtown had power to spare the lives of the prisoners, on their taking the abjuration."—(*Hist. Vind.*, p. 23.)

"Wodrow states that *he had seen it*"! We should think he had. This is not an occasion, reverend Sir, on which you care to quote the exact words of Wodrow, or give us the whole of that notable passage which Lord Macaulay suppressed. But if we follow your logic it is this:—"A *tradition* having always prevailed," *against the Government*, "that there was *something* illegal in the execution," therefore this *tradition* must have arisen from a *knowledge* of what Wodrow admits

to have been a *Government pardon*, although no such *traditional knowledge* had ever reached himself, and is not even hinted at in the Penninghame minutes! Oh, Vindicator of History, has all your boasted logic come to this? Were not the Penninghame minutes Wodrow's brief? Were not the Penninghame kirk-session (or their minister at least) Wodrow's instructors? Could *they* be cognisant of this Government pardon, and *he* ignorant of it? And does not he, your master, himself tell you, as plain as words can speak, that his own discovery of that "material pardon" had taken him utterly by surprise, and thrown him on his back? Does he not blurt out, after his own Dogberry fashion, that this unwelcome revelation only came upon him "since I wrote what is above," and that "it is of more importance to observe" than all the trash he had been cooking into history on the subject? And take care what you admit of your friends, the Penninghame kirk-session. If they really knew of that "material pardon," and withheld it from their leading counsel, they were rogues in grain. They either knew it, or did not know it. Take your choice. But do not expect to convince the world that the Penninghame romance "*implies that there was a reprieve.*" We must dispose, however, of this Alexander Shields. The egg of the cockatrice must be crushed, and then,—*Delenda est Carthago.*

1. This fanatic says, that these women were "illegally condemned." What does he mean by that? *You do not tell us*, reverend Sir, but he does. The category under which he expressly ranges the particular instance is as follows:—"List of those who were killed in *cold blood*, without *trial, conviction*, or any *colour of law*, by the *persons* underwritten: A *short hint* of those who have been *murdered* since the year 1682, will *suffee*," [suffice?]—and then we have, from this accomplished pen, the very first notice that can be discovered of the martyrdom. But, Sir, do you not perceive falsehood on the face of it? Does not your infallible kirk-session of Penninghame, your Council of Trent, and also your master Wodrow, enter into long details of how the two women, and *the child*, were voluminously libelled, tried by a jury, and condemned by the judgment of a High Court of Justiciary? And do not you yourself, at page 55 of your Vindication, found upon the testimony of this jury-

man, who shrives himself before the Wigtown kirk-session of 1704, for having "*sitten on the assize of these women*"? And were not Colonel Douglas, and the laird of Lagg,—whom this, your leading authority, names as the "persons" who suddenly, and unaccountably, became the "murderers" of these women, —two of the very same Royal Commissioners whom you yourself, in a previous page, characterise as being so leniently inclined towards these same culprits, so mercifully disinclined to order their execution, as to afford them ample time for the very purpose of allowing them to come to their senses, and to take the proper steps to obtain a reversal of their doom? You even assume that they did this to the extent of *disobedience* of the Government instructions under which that High Commission was acting! Is this concatenation of events *in rerum natura*, Vindicator? I am really curious to know how you will attempt, in a second edition of your Vindication, (which I flatter myself this Recapitulation of my Case for the Crown will call forth), to reconcile your statement at page 20, as to the anxiety of these Justiciary Judges to be relieved from carrying matters to extremity against these martyrs, with what we read at page 33, where you found so triumphantly upon the fact of Alexander Shields having *named* the President, and another of the leading members of that Commission, as being the persons who ruthlessly murdered these very women "in cold blood, without trial, conviction, or any colour of law"!

2. And here, reverend Sir, let me pose you with one other question. How can you, in the year of God 1867, be so ready and earnest in vouching for the truth of this Rabshakeh of the Conventicles, when a covenanting contemporary of his own, a vindicator of the kirk in 1691, while taking up, nearly *in ipsissimis verbis*, the song of 1690, expressly and emphatically excuses himself from being personally responsible for the truth of it; and even declines to repeat the names of those three maligned gentlemen whom the unscrupulous Shields had accused of this *impossible* murder? But hereby hangs a tale.

The "*rabbling*" of the Episcopal Clergy of Scotland, at the commencement of the Revolution, is matter of history. It is one of many chapters of covenanting history which casts upon Scotland an indelible stain The cowardly atrocities, perpetrated

upon this occasion called forth several indignant remonstrances, in the usual shape of anonymous pamphlets. Upon this occasion, these emanated from the party who had fallen into the hands of an unchristian sect, owing to the sudden and ill-judged withdrawal of all the Scotch horse to London. Scotland was thus left to the tender mercies of men whose saints were the murderers of the venerable archbishop.

In a pamphlet printed in London in 1692, and entitled, "A letter to a friend, giving an account of all the Treatises that have been published with relation to the present persecution against the Church of Scotland,"—meaning the "rabbled" Episcopal Church,—the following instructive passages occur :—

"I come now to inform you of an answer to some of those discourses above mentioned, which after a long delay was at last published under this title,—'*A Vindication of the Church of Scotland, being an answer to five pamphlets: By the author of the former Vindication in answer to the ten Questions.*' The discourses which he pretends to answer are these: 1. An Account of the Present Persecution of the Church of Scotland, in several Letters. 2. The Case of the Afflicted Clergy in Scotland truly represented. 3. A late Letter concerning the Sufferings of the Episcopal Clergy in Scotland. 4. A Memorial to his Highness the Prince of Orange in relation to the Affairs of Scotland, &c. 5. An Historical Relation of the late General Assembly held at Edinburgh from October 16 to November 13, *anno* 1690. The occasion of the long delay of this pretended answer was this: The Assembly, it seems, enjoined this task, of answering the historical accounts of the persecution, to one of their ministers, Mr Alexander Pitcairn, and recommended to him to receive particular informations from the places of the kingom in which these cruel barbarities were acted: but he, finding that the Informations sent him did *confirm the truth* of most of the Historical Relations he was required to answer, and being a man of more honesty and ingenuity (*ingenuousness*) than many of his Brethern, did, after he had for several months made a trial of the work, at last entirely decline it, because he saw these accounts could not be answered without justifying what the Rabble had done, which, he ingenuously acknowledged, he was neither able nor willing to do. And therefore they were forced to pitch upon another for this employment, *Mr Gilbert Rule;* whom, as it appears, being a man of a greater stock of boldness, and far less sincerity, than the other, they found both fitter and readier for serving their designs. And he, after a great many struggles, what with the checks of his own conscience, and the difficulties he met with in gilding over and disguising these matters of fact, which are so faithfully and so circumstantially reported in these Discourses he had undertaken to attack, at last appears abroad in the world, thinking by his bare confidence alone to impose upon the sense of mankind,

and with a bold denial to confute those truths which have all the proof and attestation that a matter of fact can possibly bear. They are owned in public and printed declarations, subscribed by the ministers upon whom these outrages were committed, and attested by many witnesses of unspotted fame and reputation. Nay, further, the ministers who were the sufferers undertake to prove the truth of these Declarations before any Judicial Court, even to the conviction of their most obstinate enemies; and what further proof can any reasonable man desire?" &c.

This Presbyterian hack, Gilbert Rule, was a doctor of medicine, who became Principal of the College of Edinburgh after the Revolution. But he was by no means so pliant as his employers would have wished him to be; and the account given in the contemporary pamphlet above quoted, that he lent his hand to this work of vindicating the ways of the revolutionary Kirk "*after a great many struggles, and checks of his own conscience,*" is curiously confirmed by himself. Of course he had to deal in recriminations, and so he repeats some of the virulent fables, to be found in those unvouched lists of "grievances and sufferings," already referred to as having been got up, chiefly in the western shires, to promote the Orange invasion. But the singularity of his "vindication" lies here, that while he repeats these low-born calumnies in his recriminative argument, he expressly declines, in his explanatory preface, to vouch for their truth And this he does in such marked and anxious terms, that, so far as relates to this sort of recrimination, he utterly destroys all faith in the truth of what he repeats. Now, this has a very important bearing upon Alexander Shields' statement of the Wigtown martyrdom, which had only appeared in the year immediately preceding that in which Dr Rule is writing. Our chary chirurgeon does not omit to introduce this terrible accusation, but he handles it as if it were a hot potato. Not only does he decline to vouch for the truth of it, but he professes such *respect* for the three gentlemen whom Shields expressly accuses, that he, Dr Rule, cannot bring himself to repeat their names, although the individuals themselves were at this time among the *proscribed*. This occurs in one of his anonymous pamphlets, entitled, "A Second Vindication of the Church of Scotland," &c., 1691, in this remarkable form:

"*Some gentlemen*, whose names, *out of respect to them*, I forbear to mention, took two women, Margaret Lachland and Margaret Wilson, the one sixty, the other twenty years, and caused them to be tied to a stake within the sea-mark of Wigtown, and left them there, till the tide overflowed them; and this was done, *without any legal trial*, in 1685."

These, under that cautious reservation, are nearly the very words of the original calumny put forth in the previous year. This is not the testimony of two contemporary writers to the same facts. It is merely one man repeating, and somewhat shyly, the words of another. The present sticklers for this famous martyrdom are fain, in their paucity of proof, to grasp at such repetitions, bearing separate dates, as if that gave them an accumulation of proofs. This feeble line of argument is a prominent characteristic of the Glasserton "Vindication of History." But the few covenanting pamphlets which contain any specific reference to the drowning of these two women, *prior* to the magnificent parochial oratorios in 1710 and 1711, are all subsequent to 1690, and all hang from the same rotten peg of that year. And how came it that Gilbert Rule, when vindicating the Kirk in 1691, knew so little about this grand melodrama of drowning at Wigtown in 1685, that he could do no more for his clients, as regards the most important, and hallowed, of their recriminative illustrations, than act as a mere parrot to Alexander Shields? Surely because, like Wodrow himself, he was personally ignorant of any such martyrdom having occurred. Nay, this vindicator of the Kirk in 1691, with a conscientious caution which you, Sir, would have done well to imitate in 1867, qualifies his slavish adoption of the words of the fanatic he quotes, in a manner that is the very reverse of reliance on their truth. The passage in his preface announcing this commendable reserve, is no less amusing than it is instructive. Of his whole vindication we may say, Reverend Sir, that the hands are the hands of Esau, but the voice is the voice of Jacob.

"The *truth* of matters of fact asserted in this treatise is *not to be taken from me*, but from those *who are my informers*. Few of them I pretend to *personal* knowledge of. Therefore, not *my veracity* is pledged for them, but *that of others*. If *I* have asserted anything that I cannot bring creditable witnesses for, let me be blamed. But if *they* have deceived,

or been deceived, (which I hope shall not be found,) *I am not to answer for that.*"

What a commentary have we here on the "Wigtown Martyrs"! Would this Presbyterian vindicator in 1691 have declined to name the "murderers," and "out of *respect for them*," had he not entertained the gravest doubts of the truth of the story? And what becomes of all those gratuitous assumptions, of there being *eye-witnesses* alive, and ready to verify the *whole marvellous details* of the Penninghame romance of 1711, more than twenty years after the alleged event, when only *six* years thereafter, this Principal of the Presbyterian College was himself so unconscious of those details, that he declined to vouch even for the fact of there having been any such martyrdom at all? This important evidence, Reverend Sir, was produced in our "Case for the Crown" (p. 86). Your answer to it is weakness itself. You say—"It may readily be admitted that the author had no personal knowledge of the Wigtown case, but got his information from others, and may have been *misinformed* as to some of the details."—(*Hist. Vind.* p. 35.) But it is perfectly plain that his mind was a blank on the subject, except in so far as informed by the Shields' pamphlet of 1690, and in which he had no faith. Then you add—"But, at all events, his (Rule's) *Vindication* gave wide circulation to the fact in question, and laid upon the agents of the late Government the *obligation* of disproving the statement if false, which no one ever did." Nay, Sir, what *obligation* can there be to *disprove* any accusation that is *nowhere proved?* You argue, however, that the accusation *is* proved by the statement of the fanatic Shields,—for the truth of which his compeer, Dr Rule, *declined to vouch!* Will you pardon me, then, Reverend Vindicator, if I point to a more trustworthy witness than that unscrupulous pamphleteer, namely, the ex-Lord Advocate, Sir George Mackenzie, whose unimpeachable testimony, published with his name at the close of that same year, 1691, does *positively disprove* the calumny of 1690, and fully justifies the *caution* of Dr Rule in declining to vouch for it. It matters not a rush whether Sir George had or had not, in his moribund retirement at Oxford, seen that virulent trash. Probably he had not. But this he tells us, in

words of unmistakeable emphasis and import, that during the whole currency of both reigns of the Restoration *only two* female State criminals suffered death, namely, *Alison* and *Harvey*, hanged together at Edinburgh in 1681 for the most obstinate and public abuse of the King, and complicity in the murder of the Archbishop. And however this most valuable testimony may be pecked at by the Presbyterian Principal of St Andrews, in our own time, we make bold to say, that the Presbyterian Principal of Edinburgh, when the ex-Lord Advocate's vindication of the Government appeared, would entertain not a shadow of doubt as to the truth of that asseveration by Sir George Mackenzie, under the solemn seal, it may be said, of the last moments of his life. For what answer did that pointed declaration receive? A *tacit admission of the fact*, from the virulent pen that replied to him, wielded by a bitter Cameronian pamphleteer, in 1692!

3. Alexander Shields *names* Colonel Douglas, and Sir Robert Grierson of Lagg, as the lawless murderers of these women; and in "History Vindicated" this boldness is founded on as a test of its truth. But it happens to be the very circumstance which affords the best means of convicting the calumniator. In a previous section of this Recapitulation, several fanatical *memoranda*, drawn up for the Prince of Orange, have been referred to (pp. lxvi–lxxi). One of them is entitled,—"Of the murders committed in the *Stewartry of Galloway* by Claverhouse, *Lag*, *Colonel Douglas*, and others," embracing the dates from 1679 to 1688. In this libellous list both Douglas and Lagg are expressly impeached. In the month of May 1685, (the crisis, be it observed, of Monmouth and Argyle's rebellion), they were both occupied in suppressing the rising in the most dangerous districts of Scotland. Accordingly, in the document above referred to, Colonel Douglas is thus accused:—"The *eleventh of May* (1685)—A man shot at Newtoun (of Galloway) by Colonel Douglas and his party, who came in the said time." Why, this is *the day and date* of the alleged Wigtown martyrdom! But what of the women drowned at Wigtown on that very day? *Not one word.* Again, in this same unscrupulous libel, Sir Robert Grierson of Lagg is thus accused:—"Six men killed by *Lag* and his party

at Lockerby, *February* 19, 1685: The 21st day, five more killed by him and his party at Kirkconnal: *June* 11, *Lag* and a party of dragoons killed other two men near to the place where he killed the five before." But what of his drowning two women at Wigtown on the 11th of *May*, the intervening date? *Not one word!* Can human reason resist the inference that no such terrible event had occurred, and that down to the year 1688, inclusive, Alexander Shield's specific accusation, put forth in his pamphlet of 1690, was unknown in Scotland? Where was the *tradition* of it in 1688?

4. It will be remembered that Wodrow, at the end of his Penninghame fable, suddenly announces that, *after* having written all that long story, he had accidentally discovered the "material pardon," of which his parochial prompters were either themselves ignorant, or had failed to inform their martyrologist. But still he had neither the sense to doubt the truth, nor the manliness to retract a word of what he had written. He leaves his ruined romance still standing, and winds up with this lame and impotent, indeed we may say, *impudent* conclusion:—"*If* matters stand thus, the people at Wigtown are deeply guilty, and had no powers for what they did; and the death of these persons was what *the Council* ought to have prosecuted *them* for"! The "people at Wigtown" are vastly obliged to the reverend Martyrologist. But is the fact that the Government did *not* prosecute the perpetrators of this most outrageous murder, in the face of a "material pardon" by Government, not to be regarded as evidence that no such crime had been committed? The ringleaders in so very public an exhibition of lynch-law could not possibly be unknown. But this suggests a question with which the chronicler of kirk-sufferings does not attempt to deal. Only three years after 1685, these lynch-lawyers, whoever they may have been, were at the mercy of William of Orange, and his myrmidons in Scotland. Were they "rabbled"? Alexander Shields had announced, in his Orange brochure of 1690, that two of the Royal Commissioners of Justiciary in 1685, and the captain of their military guard, viz., *Douglas*, *Lagg*, and *Winram*, were they who did this thing. Well? Did *King William's* Privy Council in Scotland "prosecute" the villains who had

murdered these pardoned women? Not a bit. Is that, too, no evidence that the alleged crime is a falsehood? But let us clear this matter. Let us see how it really fared with "*Lagg*,"—the reputed ringleader in this *unique* instance of *lynch-law* in Scotland, against the *mercy* exercised by the falling dynasty,—when the *new dynasty* became triumphant, and retributive justice commenced.

So anxious are the good "people at Wigtown" to save their martyrs,—or rather to *drown* their martyrs, and save their *monument*,—that, no longer ago than 1861, a zealous female, herself rejoicing in the hallowed name of *Margaret Wilson*, emitted the following strange declaration before the resident Judge of the district:—

"I, Margaret Wilson, residing in Wigtown, do hereby solemnly and sincerely declare, that the late Mr William M'Adam, of Woodside, called upon me soon after I came to Wigtown, and read over the annexed paper, and said that *his grandfather* gave it to him, saying that it was *a copy* of the petition written by himself, signed by him and others, and *forwarded to Parliament*, against Sir Robert Grierson of Lagg, as stated therein, and that his grandfather was married to one of the Wilsons of Glenvernock. (Signed) MARGARET WILSON.

"Declared before me at Wigtown this 14th day of March 1861.

(Signed) THOMAS MURRAY,
Sheriff-substitute of Wigtownshire."

The following is the paper referred to in the above declaration:—

"*Memorandum anent ane Petition to be presented to the Parliament against Sir Robert Grierson of Lagge.*

"Sir Robert having in the late evill times the command of several troops of dragoons, and being Steuart of the Steuarty of Kirkcudbright, does, *without any process or sentance of law*, cause commite severall barbrous and inhuman murders, and that upon no other account but upon church irregularities, and does execute his fury against this poor people in such a manner as cannot well be expressed. A particular account of all his barbarities is not designed in this place, but only such of them as are most notour and deserve best the consideration of the honourable states of Parliament, which are as follows:—

"1st, Sir Robert, after he had apprehended two women—to wit, Margaret Lauchlison and Margaret Wilson—upon no other account but for *alleged non-conformity*, did, *without any legal conviction or sentence*, cause bind them to a stake within the sea-mark at Wigtoune, till the flood returning drowned them both, and that without any consideration of the age of the one or the youth of the other, the said Margaret Lauchlison being above 63 years of age, and the other 18 years old. This was done in the month of May 1685."

This strange production appeared in the *Dumfries and Galloway Courier*, 26th March 1861, as conclusive proof of that extraordinary murder having been committed by the Stewart of Kirkcudbright, one of the Royal Commissioners of Justiciary who condemned these women, and who also afforded them every facility for having their doom reversed. But the trash, as usual, destroys itself. It is utterly inconsistent with the proved state of the facts, as regards the trial and condemnation, and with the subsequent petitions for mercy, and consequent reprieve by the Privy Council. But let us consult the Privy Council Register, in the hey-day of the Orange triumph, and see what was done with this *Ogre Lagg*, who, if the above story be true, had most justly forfeited his life both to the Government which had fallen and to that which was now triumphant.

In the *Acta* of the Council Records, and at a sederunt dated 8th July 1689, we find an "order for incarcerating the Laird of Lagg" in these terms:—"The Lord High Commissioner, his Grace, and Lords of His Majesty's Privy Council, do hereby grant warrant to incarcerate the Laird of Lagg within the Tolbooth of Edinburgh, *till further order*." The next order which appears on the subject is at a sederunt dated 23d August 1689, as follows:—

"Sederunt, 23d August 1689.—Anent a petition given in to the Lords of their Majestys' Privy Counsall by Sir Robert Grierson of Lagg, shewing, that wher(as) the petitioner was, upon the 8th day of July last, imprisoned within the Tolbooth of Edinburgh by the said Lords' order, and seeing his health is much endangered by being kept so long a prisoner, and that there was a malignant fever broke out in the prison, whereof one is already dead, and another very sick, and that he was content to find sufficient caution to appear before the saids Lords at such time as they should think fit, and therefore humbly supplicating to the effect aftermentioned. The Lords of his Majesty's Privy Council having considered the above petition, they ordain the petitioner to be set at liberty, he *granting bond and finding caution to live peaceably and with all submission to the present government under King William and Queen Mary*, and that he should not act, consult, or contrive any thing in their prejudice, nor converse or correspond with the rebels or others he knows to be acting, consulting, or contriving any thing against the present government, and that he shall appear when called, under the penalty of £1500 sterling."

That the "rabbling" party, now striving, and too successfully at first, for the ascendancy in Scotland, were desirous of going all lengths against every one who had been prominently active in keeping the peace of the kingdom, protecting the lives and liberties of the well disposed lieges, and struggling to save the kingdom itself, during the latter days of the Stuart dynasty, is notorious. No doubt Sir Robert Grierson of Lagg was a marked man, both as a magistrate in frequent conjunction with military, and from the determined manner in which he fulfilled his duty to the State in a rebellious district, and alarming times. Probably he was a very rough-spoken gentleman in his vocation, having very rough customers to deal with. But there are no rational grounds for doubting that he was a conscientious and valuable magistrate, of indomitable pluck, and that, so far from acting in disobedience to any merciful edict emanating from his own Government, he never went a foot beyond his commission, or his orders from the Privy Council, with whom he was in constant communication. The vile epithets and blasphemous execrations heaped upon him in conventicle tracts are beneath contempt, and we believe that the *ogre* character assigned to him, under such promptings, by a portion of the lower classes in Scotland, is as complete a myth as the "Wigtown Martyrs." In 1691, even after he had been imprisoned as a nonconforming loyalist, we see that Dr Rule himself, who at that time certainly could be under no personal dread of the ogre, regarded him as one entitled to "*respect*," and shrank from naming him in connection with the alleged lawless murder of these women. And now, when we come to consult that invaluable Register of the Privy Council, we find therein materials which must satisfy every rational mind that his having murdered, or been instrumental in murdering, these pardoned convicts, and by a most public execution at Wigtown, on the 11th of May 1685, is an utter impossibility.

For, *first*: Independently of many other proofs destructive of so absurd an accusation, the Government instructions to Lagg himself, dated on the 29th of that same month, are thus temperately and judiciously worded:—"To report *frequent accounts* of your diligence, and of the condition of the place;"

to which order there is added this postscript,—"*The Council doubt not that upon this occasion you will take care that honest men and their tenants meet with as little trouble as possible.*" Is it within the bounds of rational belief that, just *eighteen days* before this quiet instruction, the tone of which indicates no cause of complaint whatever against this important official, he had been perpetrating the murderous and insane act of *lynching*, in broad daylight, and before the whole world of the west, two insignificant women, whom the Privy Council had just pardoned, on their own petitions and *peccavi?* Would the Stewart of Kirkcudbright not rather have been summoned before the Council to answer for his conduct with his life? Now, there is not a vestige to be discovered in the Council records, nor anywhere else, of any proceedings whatever, taken against any person whatever, relating to any martyrdom of the kind! How could this be were it true? Yet what have we urged upon us by the Primarius Professor of St Andrews in support of this wild idea? He *admits* that the women were reprieved, as for a pardon, but maintains that they were *lynched*, in defiance of a merciful decree of the highest tribunal in the kingdom, by some truculent but *nameless* subordinate "officials" in the town of Wigtown! We must here repeat Dr Tulloch's own words, because they furnish a striking example of how crudely, and with how inaccurate a notion of the mode in which Scotland was governed at that critical period, even a Presbyterian Divine occupying so elevated a position, will condescend to argue in struggling to save this fabulous absurdity for behoof of the fanaticism of Scotland. "It was not," says the Principal, "the regular act of the Government, —the fact of the reprieve must be *allowed so far in exoneration*,—but a *high-handed outrage by its provincial agents.* Nothing is *more likely* than that such an event, happening in a remote part of Scotland, and when the means of communication were tardy beyond our present conception, did not *directly reach* either of these authorities (the Lord Advocate and Fountainhall) in Edinburgh." Nay, this won't do. The evidence is unanswerable, that the fact of this "high-handed outrage by its provincial agents," *never reached the Government at all*, although the lynching alleged is of a date when

the communication with the officials in that disorganised and dangerous quarter, especially with the energetic Stewart of Kirkcudbright, was systematically kept up, and necessarily most anxious and continuous. That Sir Robert Grierson, or any one under his orders, was at that serious crisis travelling out of his official orders, and the path of his arduous duties, publicly to murder, and after the most sensational and dramatic manner, two insignificant females, and that he should have done so with *absolute impunity*, is an idea so *ignorant*, that we must express extreme surprise it should have received any countenance whatever *è cathedra* of St Andrews.

But, *second:* When, in 1689, the *Orange* Government saw fit to incarcerate this sturdy loyalist, manifestly it was only in reference to the uncompromising character of his political principles, and under no specific charge of cruelty or martyrdom, as the above extract from the Privy Council Register sufficiently proves. And in conformity with this are the very lenient terms of his release, upon the 23d of August 1689, after an imprisonment of about six weeks. Nor was Sir Robert Grierson, who lived to be an old man, ever afterwards disturbed.

It may now be assumed as thoroughly proved, if human evidence can prove anything, that that first specific record of the *martyrdom* of these two women at Wigtown, put forth by Alexander Shields in his "Short Memorial of Sufferings and Grievances," printed for the "Society People" in 1690, and which the minister of Glasserton has rashly adopted for truth, is as gross a falsehood as was ever infused into the annals of a country by a malignant spirit, amid the troubles of a great revolutionary agitation. Nor can this falsehood excite surprise, when the rabid character of its fabricator is considered. He had the effrontery to endeavour to thrust his venom upon the first Orange General Assembly, convened in October 1690. But the inflammatory papers which he presented for that purpose met with the contemptuous rejection and rebuke which ought to have been the fate of that first record by him of the Wigtown martyrdom (put forth in that same year, 1690), at the hands of the worthy minister of Glasserton, in our own less troublous, if not more enlightened times. The verdict pronounced upon the virulent overture of this firebrand to King

William's Assembly of the Kirk in 1690, was thus severely expressed:—"That it contains *several peremptory gross mistakes, unseasonable and impracticable proposals, uncharitable and injurious reflections.*" Accordingly, he was compelled to give in "his submission and subjection,"—to the great wrath and indignation of Patrick Walker the chapman,—and was "admonished" by the Moderator. And so the "uncharitable and injurious" author of the "Wigtown Martyrdom" was snubbed, and snuffed out.[1]

The *earliest* record of this famous fable being thus demonstrated to be false and malicious, really the ground is cut from under the whole story in all its mendacious phases. What Wodrow published, nearly thirty years afterwards, is just an *ad captandum* expansion, as absurd as it is audacious, got up in the most fanatical parishes of westland whiggery, of the original calumny by Alexander Shields. Detecting him destroys the whole superstructure, and must of itself suffice, with every unprejudiced mind only bent on saving the integrity of history, to extinguish all faith in this extravagant legend. Our "Memorials of Dundee," 1862, compelled the Principal of St Andrews to admit (for the first time), amid much confusion and inconsistency of argument, that "the well known Wigtown martyrology has *evidently* been surrounded with a *considerable amount of fictitious embellishment;* it is *not likely* that the martyr-scene was so *entirely edifying* as represented in the pages of Wodrow." "Wodrow's stories *everywhere* bear the stamp of this *imaginative development.*" Did any one in this argumentative world ever so completely argue himself out of court? If we follow the Principal's denuding process,—conceived somewhat behind the time,—if we proceed, under his stripping system, to divest this "beautiful old story" of all its most sacred vestments, piece by piece, throughout the whole mysterious complication of its clothing, from the top to the bottom garments of grace, what shall we find beneath? Truth in all her naked beauty? Sister Scholastica? The virgin of eighteen?—(Never mind *old* Meg, Glasserton; she is not in the Stirling monument),—*Not a bit.* We arrive at the miser-

[1] See "Case for the Crown," p. 85.

able mummy of the author of "A Hind Let Loose;" the man who tells us, that under the direct prompting of God himself it was, that the venerable Archbishop was murdered on Magus Moor; and that, under the orders of the Privy Council of Scotland in 1685, two harmless, helpless, pious females were tied to stakes in the sand until the flowing tide of the Solway overwhelmed them; and this "in cold blood, without trial, conviction, or any colour of law,"—by Colonel Douglas, the Laird of Lagg, and Captain Winram! The matter, then, standing thus, that the *short* statement in 1690 by Alexander Shields is *proved* to be one great lie, while the *long* statement by Wodrow in 1722 is publicly *admitted*, even by the Presbyterian Principal of St Andrews himself, to be made up of a great many lies—academically called *imaginative embellishments*—what becomes of the "Wigtown Martyrs"?

And this, too, be it observed, settles the question of *tradition;* a martyrological argument, however, which requires to be specially dealt with. For the total absence of any official record of such a public and heart-stirring execution, indeed of any record of it whatever that can stand the inspection of common sense,—and, on the other hand, the mass of evidence now brought to light proving this most improbable story to be a perfect myth,—has raised a loud cry of *tradition*, from the clerical dragons of the shrine of the Solway, which sounds almost like a cry of agony. They are flocking to battle with "the word of the Lord and Wodrow," inscribed on their terrible banners. Before proceeding, therefore, to demonstrate more fully the true story of the "Wigtown Martyrs," let us dispose of

Trädition versus *Truth.*

In this Wigtown war, certain ephemeral publications, more especially the *Scotsman* newspaper, have vended a great deal of loose and rambling matter about tradition, in which the distinction between the partial and local *transmission* of a fanatical fable, through a limited number of vulgar and prejudiced minds, and the universal and time-honoured *tradition* of a rational historical fact, is entirely lost sight of. It has been maintained, in the most perfunctory manner, that the

original State record, of the government pardon of these women, above all suspicion as a probative production, coinciding, too, with a variety of other proofs, direct and corroborative, and with every rational probability in its favour, must absolutely go for nothing, and submit to be pooh-poohed, as a clerical error, or a forgery, or (as Dr Tulloch phrases it) "a hastily concocted and incomplete document," because of an *assumed* popular tradition—for the very fact of such tradition existing, in any legitimate sense of that species of historical proof, is mere assumption—that the marvellous martyrdom which this overwhelming proof destroys, did nevertheless occur. But the minister of Glasserton seems all abroad on the question of tradition, and falls into no slight degree of confusion in handling an argument that is very essential to his case. At first he argues that this martyrdom is proved by *tradition*. Subsequently he flies off from that idea and maintains that it is proved by *eye-witnesses*. We shall deal with these views separately.

At page 32 of "History Vindicated," that "*universal* local belief which has always existed in Galloway," is founded on as conclusive of its truth. By way of strengthening this argument, the reverend author puts *himself* into the box, and depones vaguely as to the belief of his own personal "ancestors," which, after all, might only mean his grandmother. "As a native of Galloway," says the worthy minister, "whose ancestors were resident there long prior to 1685, *I can certify* that the story of the Wigtown martyrs is one which *I have heard told* from my earliest years; and that I never heard a doubt expressed as to the fact in question till after the *Memorials of Dundee* in 1862." We do not question it in the least, and are vastly proud of the compliment. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ*. But this kind of twaddle about tradition might serve just as well to prove the truth of Jack and the Bean-stalk. Let us examine, however, our reverend opponent's argument on tradition more closely.

At the same page of "History Vindicated," we find the following under the head of *Tradition*. "It is not necessary," he says, "to do more than refer to the *tradition* which has handed down to successive generations in Galloway, the story of the

drowning of the two women at Wigtown in 1685—a tradition which still points to the spot on the sands below the town of Wigtown where the tragedy was enacted. Tradition is not the best vehicle of *accurate* historical truth. Some circumstantial details *will drop out* of any narrative so transmitted, and others *may be added* that are *at variance with the truth.*" But, reverend Vindicator of History, what is the value of that traditionary evidence, to prove so marvellous and circumstantial a story as this of the Wigtown martyrdom, and in the face of the most unimpeachable proof to the contrary, if you admit that some "circumstantial details" have *dropt out,* and others have been *added* that are "at variance with the truth"? For that is really what I read you to mean. You have here just fallen into the stripping process of the Tullochian Convent, leaving your poor virgin sister of eighteen to scud under the bare poles of an unmitigated falsehood. You next say (the italics are your own), "Still there must be a foundation in truth for the *main facts: they* cannot be completely reversed, and yet the story gain general belief in the district in which the events occurred." But seeing that there are circumstantial details *omitted,* and facts introduced "*at variance with the truth,*" what with this lying *out,* and this lying *in,* we would really like to know what *are* the "main facts" which secure to you "a foundation in truth"? Oh, I see you tell us: "The *drowning* is, doubtless, the main fact in the story of *Lauchlison* and *Wilson*"—we scarcely expected this irreverence from Vindicator—"which tradition has handed down; and had there been *no drowning* in the case, there would have been *no story,* and the names of the two women would not have been remembered after the generation in which they lived. Their trial and sentence are facts admitted; but had the case ended in a recantation on their part, followed by a pardon, how could it have got into general belief in Galloway, and been handed down from father to son, that they were executed *in accordance with their sentence*"?

In all this we have a remarkable specimen of martyrological logic, shewing how utterly regardless of any amount of unanswerable refutation is martyrological faith. It cannot now be maintained that there was *no* "recantation on their part followed

by a pardon." For *there* is the *original* petition containing the recantation! *There* is the *original* State record proving beyond all rational doubt, that that recantation *was* "followed by a pardon." Wodrow himself confessed it to be "a *material pardon*"—and doubtless was only saved from fainting, when he found it, by a vigorous application to his *mull*. He would sooner have met with the Evil One than that pardon. So you are reduced to limit "the main fact in the story," to "the *drowning*"! But this is not stating your case,—it is *shirking* it. If your martyrdom have a main fact in it at all, you must state it thus,—that these women were drowned at Wigtown, *by the Government of King James, in pursuance of their sentence to that effect*, pronounced by the High Court of Justiciary at Wigtown in 1685. If you don't prove all that, reverend Sir, you prove nothing whatever to the purpose of this, your pet martyrdom. You argue, that "had there been *no drowning* in the case, there would have been *no story*." Nay, reverend Sir, we beg leave to offer a sounder proposition: *Had there been* drowning in the case, there would have been *no doubt about the women having been drowned*. But did not "*our Jacobites* have the impudence to deny" this drowning? And did not some still "deny it to be matter of fact"—when Wodrow romanced in 1722, and Walker blasphemed in 1727? Your postulate is, that "the main facts *cannot* be completely *reversed*." Why not? By your own showing they can. What if "the circumstantial details *dropt out*" be *the pardon*, and that which has been "added *at variance with the truth*" be *the drowning*,—what then, Vindicator of History?

But before leaving the question of *tradition*, we must not forget that you have high authority for this somewhat dangerous (as you yourself seem subsequently to have discovered) line of argument. The Principal of St Andrews, in order to save a remnant of his Presbyterian predilections, was fain to retreat, *parma non bene relicta*, from the whole field of record, and legitimate proof on the subject, into some vague declamation about tradition, entirely depending for its plausibility upon mere verbal mystification. Rejecting, and in terms neither calm nor courteous, all refutation from such a quarter as the defender of Dundee, his wounded faith took refuge in the bril-

liancy of his academic style, and the eloquence of his fond imaginings. "But," argues our very reverend opponent, "supposing it were *allowed* that these *Records*,"—meaning *both* the Kirkinner and Penninghame narratives, which are essentially different—"*could* be *fabrications*, they are inadequate to account for the *tradition which has lived universally in the hearts of the peasantry in Galloway since the commencement of last century*"!

Are "fabricated records" inadequate to account for a false tradition? Why, it is just that which *does* account for it. "Lived universally in the hearts of the peasantry" of a westland parish since the beginning of the last century! What then? What is this but a fanfaronade of fine words—a little gilding to gloze a flimsy argument? But fine words will no more make or mar proof, than they will butter parsnips. In very truth and common sense, the learned Principal knows no more about what has lived universally in the hearts of the peasantry of Galloway since the beginning of last century, than he knows what has lived universally in the heart of the moon since centuries began. Pray, what is the precise value here of the word "universally"? Has it been ascertained that there were *no* exceptions? And did this tradition only commence to live in hearts "*since* the commencement of last century"? Where was it living in the century *before* the last, which happens to be that in which the martyrdom in question is said to have occurred? Where was it between 1685 and 1688, when the collectors of "sufferings," purveyors for the Orange invasion, at the *very spot*, nay, on the *very day*, of that tremendous sacrifice, noticed it not; but on the contrary, when *first* they imagined the calumny of "drowning of women," fastened that monstrous fiction, not upon King James, but upon his immediate predecessor, who died before the date of the trial of these women? Where was the tradition in 1690, when Sir George Mackenzie declared two women to be the *only* females who suffered for rebellious courses throughout both reigns of the Restoration,—and these were *not* the Wigtown martyrs? Where was it in 1691, when that same official declaration was tacitly assented to, in the virulent answer which immediately appeared against Sir George's Vindication of his Government? Where was it

in the days of Wodrow's *boyhood*,—who, in 1685, was six years of age,—that not a shadow of so awful an event had ever rested on the cobwebs of his own brain? Where was it in Wodrow's *manhood*, in 1722, when "our Jacobites had the impudence to deny" the truth of the story? Where was it eight years after that, when Patrick Walker's insane version was met by the same indignant denial, as he himself complains, by a whole community of the people of Scotland? But the tradition, it seems, has lived in the hearts of the *peasantry of Galloway*. Is it the more trustworthy on that account? Of the many peasant hearts in which it has so lived, what is the proportion to the more enlightened hearts of the same district in which it never lived at all, or to the utterly indifferent hearts? What is the proportion of the female hearts to the male hearts? How many *Mauses* to how many *Cuddies?* We must not allow the poisonous sources of vulgar error to flood the wholesome pastures of legitimate history, even at the dictation of the head of a Presbyterian College. At this rate, *Tradition* might prove the moon to be made of green cheese, against the telescope of Galileo and the Principia of Newton.

The fact is, that tradition is a makeshift. It is a mere substitute, and a very fallacious one, for written record. One end of it is with us,—the other, *in nubibus* doubtfully approximating to the date of the fact to be proved. The truth of profane history is rarely to be found in what is called, and often miscalled, *tradition*. Whether it be presented in the winning form of a romantic ballad, or the wicked one of a Wigtown martyrdom,—whether collected by a loyal border minstrel in our own times, or fished for and cooked by a Whig kirk-session assisting at the birth of the "Immortal Memory," —let the lover of Truth beware of the counterfeit. Not that we would quarrel with a purely pathetic or romantic legend, because it can be shewn to be untrue. Far from it. But when our generous, or patriotic, sympathies are enlisted in the service of *calumny*, whether it be pathos pandering to political calumny, or calumny ministering to romantic pathos, the genius of such mischievous romancing ought to be arrested as a criminal impostor, and handed over to the police of letters.

But in this question of tradition as living in the hearts of the peasantry of Galloway, we have still to deal with higher authority than even the Principal of St Andrews. The most profound reasoner, in this argument of tradition, our most formidable opponent as champion of the Wigtown Martyrs, is the late member for Wigtownshire, Sir Andrew Agnew. We must tighten the buckles of our armour, and re-adjust our sorely battered casque. The parochial minister of the Solway, and the Primarius Professor of St Mary's, being both down for this turn,—come on, Knight of Lochnaw.

It may relieve the monotony of this troublesome investigation; tedious as the Sorrows of Saurin, if we engage our gallant opponent in a hypothetical forensic form, and *suppose* him called as a witness to answer interrogatories in the "*Case for the Crown.*" Call Sir Andrew Agnew.

Enter Sir Andrew with a book. Examined by the Counsel for the last Crown of the Stuarts,—

Sir Andrew, we have taken the liberty to call you, with the view of obtaining the most authentic information relative to the historical traditions of Galloway. I see you have a book with you. Perhaps it is the same of which I have a copy beside me, entitled,—"A History of the Hereditary Sheriffs of Galloway, with Contemporary Anecdotes, Traditions, and Genealogical Notices of Old Families of the Sheriffdom, from 1350 to 1747," published in 1864? I presume, Sir Andrew, that includes traditions of the noted Claverhouse; and, more particularly, the tragical history of the "Wigtown Martyrs"?

It does.

Well, Sir Andrew, it is chiefly on such subjects I am about to trouble you; and as you have very properly brought your own valuable local and family annals with you, I may mention that you are at perfect liberty to refresh your memory by referring to them if you please. I suppose you would wish not to travel out of your own record?

Certainly; I have no desire to do so.

I see, Sir Andrew, that you have made some acquaintance with Mr Napier's "Memorials and Letters illustrative of the Life and Times of Viscount Dundee," in three volumes, published in 1859 and 1862. Have you studied those volumes very closely?

By no means very closely,—they are not to my taste; but I have read quite enough to form my opinion of the work.

That opinion, I believe, is not favourable?

Far from it. You will find that I have recorded it, at page 432 of my own book, in these terms:—"Mr Mark Napier, the warm ad-

mirer of Claverhouse (whom he bombastically calls the GREAT DUNDEE)! and the *vilifier* of all those who contributed to bring about the glorious Revolution of 1688, assumes as his premises, that implicit reliance may be placed on all Claverhouse's writings and despatches, while all Whig and Presbyterian authors are to be utterly disbelieved. Hence he not only doubts the drowning of the women upon Wigtown sands, but he doubts every tale or incident at variance with his preconceived ideas."

A sweeping accusation, Sir Andrew, expressed in most comprehensive and very general terms. You know the maxim—*Dolus latet in generalibus?*

I am not aware of its application in the present case.

Well, I don't wish to lead you out of your depth. But why should implicit reliance not be placed upon the *facts* stated in Claverhouse's despatches,—I mean his official reports to the head-quarters of Government, recently recovered by Mr Napier from the Queensberry archives?

Because these facts frequently run counter to *Galloway traditions* of his own acts and deeds.

Are you of opinion, Sir Andrew, that a Galloway tradition must always outweigh a fact stated by Claverhouse, if they run counter to each other?

Certainly I am.

But you will find a letter, page 349 of Mr Napier's second volume, from the Duke of York to Queensberry, in which he states: "I am confident they do Clavers much wrong who report he should say I am displeased with you; since, I assure you, there is no such thing, and that *he is not a man to say things that are not.*"

But I have as little faith in James as in Claverhouse.

Be it so, Sir Andrew. Why do you condemn the epithet, "Great Dundee," as *bombast?*

I have called it bombastical because I think it is so.

But are you not aware that the expression is sanctioned by Sir Walter Scott,—

> "The hour my brave, my only boy,
> Fell by the side of GREAT DUNDEE"?

Yes, but a poetical license in Sir Walter Scott becomes bombast from the pen of Mr Napier.

A palpable hit. "An I had thought you were so cunning in fence," &c.,—Sir Andrew Aguecheek,—

Sir, my name is not *Aguecheek!* No *cheek*, if you please.

I really must beg your pardon; *Agnew*, I should have said. Pray excuse a little confusion in quoting from *Twelfth Night*, especially as you have made so good a pun. Is "Bloody Clavers" bombastical?

No. That is historical.

On what founded?

Universal tradition.

Are there many traditions and anecdotes about bloody Clayers in your hereditary Sheriffdom, Sir Andrew?

Oh, I should think there were.

He was cruel, but *plucky*, was he not?

Cruel, and *not* plucky.

What! Clavers not plucky? By the way, Sir Andrew, had he not something to do with your *hereditary Sheriffdom?*

Yes; he ejected my ancestor, Sir Andrew Agnew, and usurped his place.

Oh, I see. Just as Cromwell did by the crown of Charles, as being more worthy to wear it?

Not just the same; for Clavers neither got my ancestor's head, nor was he at all worthy to wear that which crowned it.

Good again, Sir Andrew. But why do you say that Clavers was not plucky? How do you prove that?

By anecdotes and traditions in my book.

They must be very original; pray let us have them.

You will permit me to refresh my memory from my book?

By all means, Sir Andrew.

You will find, at page 391, that I have recorded how cavalierly Lady Stair treated Claverhouse to his face, at a dinner party, while on one of his military expeditions into Galloway. "Being seated at table, as the conversation became free, Claverhouse, whose name we must premise was always pronounced *Clavers*, inveighed against Presbyterians in general, and against John Knox in particular, with a vehemence by no means acceptable to a Galloway audience. Lady Stair listened in silence for a while, till at length, able to stand it no longer, she exclaimed across the table, 'Captain, just let me say this, and think you well on it: *Knox* gained his end by *Clavers*, and *Clavers* won't win his without *Knox* (*knocks*)!'"

Oh, Sir Andrew, you might have spared us that old trumpery, worn out, apocryphal story. No one doubts Lady Stair's pluck. But your evidence, if you please, that *Clavers* was not plucky?

Sir, I am equally determined with my excellent and truly learned friend, the minister of Glasserton, not to imitate the style of the "Case for the Crown." The reverend gentleman has set an admirable example in that respect. The evidence you require is recorded by me at page 398, under the heading, "A Challenge to Claverhouse;" and the hero of it is John Dalrymple, a young boy, who became the celebrated Marshal Stair. "A story is told at Glenluce of this boy. In October 1682, his grandfather, Lord Stair, having found it unsafe to remain at home, retired to Holland, where his lady was soon to follow him. When she was ready to leave her home, John Dalrymple assisted her to mount her horse, and was so much distressed at observing his grandmother's grief, of which he believed Claverhouse to be the cause, that, boy as he was, some fourteen or fifteen years old, he sent him a challenge. Claverhouse treated his message with silent contempt, but the irritated youth was not to be so put off. Going to the inn where the terrible man was staying, he encountered him on the stairs, and repeated his defiance. Graham laughed at him outright, upon which young Dalrymple *deliberately spat in his face*. But, great as was

the insult, *tradition says* that the bloody Claverhouse *pocketed the affront.*"

Well, that *is* an original anecdote, Sir Andrew. If it be a lie, it is certainly one with a circumstance. I see you quote no special authority. May I ask what *is* your authority?

WIGTOWNSHIRE TRADITION.

Well done Wigtownshire tradition. You say this plucky boy *sent* a hostile challenge to Clavers. Pray who carried it? Another plucky boy?

The tradition does not say.

Who do you suppose?

A Whig gentleman probably. But the tradition does not say.

You say that this boy was the same who became the celebrated Marshal Stair, and that when he spat in the face of Colonel Graham of Claverhouse, the plucky youth was "some fourteen or fifteen years old"?

Wigtownshire Tradition says so.

Well, this happened, I think you tell us, about October 1682?

Yes, according to the Wigtownshire tradition.

But authentic *record* says that Marshal Stair was born in Edinburgh, 20th July 1673; so that in October 1682 this boy could not have been more than *nine years and three months old.* What say you to that, Sir Andrew?

Well, I say, the smaller the boy, the greater the pluck. But you must remember, Sir, that "it is the *rule* of this sort of literature to become impregnated in its descent by the imaginative fertility of the consciousness of the time."

Come, come, Sir Andrew, *that's* not in your book. That's *Dr Tulloch's* thunder. But can you give us no idea of what manner of man, or boy, it was who undertook to carry such a message to Colonel Graham from a boy of nine years of age?

The tradition says nothing about that.

Don't you think that the messenger, at least if come to the years of discretion, would have been more likely to carry such a message to the boy's grandmother?

The tradition does not tell us so.

Did the boy give any hint of what he was about to do, to his grandmother, while assisting her to mount?

The tradition is silent on that subject.

Does the tradition happen to mention whether the boy's *mother knew that he was out*, or at least that he was going out?

Sir, your style shall not be imitated by me.

That's borrowed from Glasserton, Sir Andrew, *vide* "History Vindicated," page 6. But let that pass. You say, "The bloody Claverhouse pocketed the affront." What, precisely, do you mean by that?

Why, that he put the affront in his pocket, to be sure.

I presume you mean, that the gallant Colonel, I beg pardon, the bloody Colonel, wiped his dishonoured face with his handkerchief, and put *that* into his pocket?

Tradition does not so put it, but certainly Clavers put up with it.

In short, the boy of nine years of age made the greatest cavalier of his day *eat his leek*. Well. You say, the boy met him on the stair of an inn; probably the Colonel was either going up or coming down at the time; can you tell which?

The tradition does not say, and it matters little; but as the boy had gone to seek him, probably he met the terrible man coming down.

Claverhouse was rarely out of the saddle then, so he would have a riding-rod or whip of some kind in his hand?

The tradition does not say so; at all events he did not use it.

He would be in full uniform as commanding the cavalry; for I see you say, at page 390, "Claverhouse (in 1682) arrived in Galloway in great style, his movements being in fact often attended with the pomp and circumstance of war"?

Doubtless. But of course he would not dare to use his sword against the boy. You will observe, too, what I say of this Glenluce tradition, at page 399: "The story *is told to prove* that Claverhouse, daring as he was, had no cool courage—as *the boy was already celebrated for his fencing skill*—and that he had no stomach for a hand-to-hand encounter."

There can be no doubt what the story is told to prove, Sir Andrew, but *does* it prove it?

It proves the *tradition*, at least.

Oh, I see. The tradition proves the tradition. Had the boy a sword with him; or a foil with the button off?

The tradition does not tell us.

How do you know that the boy "was already celebrated for his fencing skill"?

Oh, the tradition *does* tell us that.

Don't you think that this encounter with the plucky boy on the stairs was one in which "cool courage" would be very little needed? Suppose bloody Clavers had kicked young plucky from the top to the bottom of the stairs, what then, Sir Andrew?

What then? Why, in all probability, young plucky would never have risen to be at the head of the *Stairs*.

Very good, Sir Andrew. I venture to say, there is not so good a thing as that in your whole book. Well, but, Sir Andrew, will you lay your knightly hand upon your hereditary heart, and say that you *believe* that Glenluce story?

You put it *bombastically*, Sir; but I have no hesitation in laying my hand upon a passage in my book, which comprehends an answer to your question. At page 399 you will see that I say:—"We do not *vouch* for the truth of this; but *it is a genuine country tale*"!

That's an odd way of fighting your battle for tradition, Sir Andrew. It's something like hitting a man and running away. When you say "a genuine country tale," you mean, I presume, "a genuine tradition of the people of Galloway"?

Of course.

One of those *Wigtownshire traditions* which outweigh *Claverhouse's facts*!

Most assuredly it does that.

Would you say that it outweighed a letter from Claverhouse himself, in which he happens to state, manifestly in reference to the incident in question, that he met the boy on the stair, who delivered *a note from his grandmother inviting Claverhouse to dinner?* Remember, Sir Andrew, how these beautiful old stories become impregnated in their descent by the imaginative fertility of the consciousness of the time.

Most assuredly I would. But I am not aware of any letter, or despatch, from Claverhouse, containing any such contradiction of the tradition in question.

Neither am I, Sir Andrew. But let us now pass to another subject. I see you have a whole chapter entitled "The Wigtown Martyrs." I suppose you have by heart all the Galloway traditions touching that most affecting tragedy?

I should think I had.

I may also take it for granted that you are minutely cognisant of all that "has lived universally in the hearts of the peasantry in Galloway since the commencement of last century" relating to that "beautiful old story"?

You again put it bombastically, Sir; but,—

Have a care, Sir Andrew. That is *not* bombast. It is Dr Tulloch!

Oh, I beg the Principal's pardon; I ought to have said, *metaphorically*. Certainly, I may say there are none more intimately acquainted with the state of the traditional evidence in support of that sad and fearful story than I am myself.

And the hearts of the peasantry? You have searched them deeply, and far and wide throughout the district, on the subject of this time-honoured tradition, I suppose?

Certainly, and for the most part of my life. I have represented it in Parliament for years.

What! the Wigtown Martyrdom?

No, Sir; I mean the county which has been immortalised by that glorious triumph of Christian faith over "the official brutalities that made the Restoration Government odious throughout Scotland."

I do not find that in your book, Sir Andrew. You are again helping yourself to Dr Tulloch's thunder. So I won't call it bombast. You agree with him, I suppose, that "the tradition has lived universally in the hearts of the peasantry in Galloway since the commencement of last century"?

I do,—with this exception, however: The Principal is wrong in dating the tradition only from some period *since* the commencement of last century. The martyrdom was perpetrated long prior to the close of the century before the last, namely, in the 17th century; and the memory of that sacrifice has been cherished in Galloway ever since it happened.

Oh, I see. The Principal's traditional ladder is too short to hook on to the event?

Just so.

Well, Sir Andrew, give us your *terminus a quo*.

I think I have given it in my book. Look at page 432:—"Mr Napier's *doubts* are about as likely to influence opinion in Galloway as are the subtler scepticisms of *Bishop Colenso*. Hard words *cannot demolish faith in the unbroken tradition of two hundred years;* as to which most persons may be disposed to agree with the shrewd saying of Lord Hailes, that 'a lie may live for a day or a year, but it will hardly pass from father to son for near a century.'"

Lord Hailes is not the first shrewd man who has said a foolish thing, and thought it a wise one. Dr Tulloch, it would seem, is quite on the other tack. But let that pass. You think Mr Napier can no more influence opinion in Galloway than could Bishop Colenso?

Most assuredly.

But your friend, the minister of Glasserton, tells us,—"Weak though Mr Napier's argument is, it has *made some converts even in Galloway*, and more elsewhere, where the circumstances are less known." You martyrologists seem to be all at sixes and sevens with each other. But I am not quite done with the *terminus a quo* of your tradition. In your book, the date of which is 1864, you trace it back *two hundred years*, which carries us far into the century before last. So your ladder is considerably longer than Dr Tulloch's?

Certainly it is.

But, Sir Andrew, the given date of the Wigtown martyrdom is 11th May 1685. Now, according to your shewing, the tradition dates at least from 1664. So your tradition of the event is *older than the event itself!* What say you to that, Sir Andrew?

Well, I suppose I have overshot the mark a little. Of course I meant two hundred years, *more or less.*

Never mind, Sir Andrew, you are not the first roving archer who has shot too far in handling a very long bow. But let us come to closer quarters on the subject of the hearts of the peasantry of Galloway. Dr Tulloch only favours us with the general assertion. Are you enabled to illustrate the Principal's text with particular examples?

Most assuredly. My local knowledge enables me to do so to a great extent.

Be so kind as to favour us with some example to begin with.

Certainly. You will find, at page 431 of my book, that I have recorded the following:—"A very old man in Wigtown was lately asked what he thought as to the possibility of these *most startling passages* in his country's history being untrue after all? 'Weel, weel,' he replied, with *perfect simplicity*, 'they that doubts the droonin' of the wemen may *as weel doubt the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.*'"

When you speak of "these most startling passages in his country's history," to what exactly do you refer?

Of course I refer to what I had previously given at full length,—"The story simply as it stands in the session records of the *parish of Penninghame*, written twenty-six years after the tragedy took place, with the view of preserving the tale as it was then popularly told, and when *many actual eye-witnesses of the deed* were still alive."

But are you not aware, Sir Andrew, that all "these *most startling* passages," as they "stand in the session records of the parish of Penninghame," in 1711, are now admitted by the Principal of St Andrews, in his review of Mr Napier's "Memorials of Dundee," to be lies, to which there could be no eye-witnessing?

Excuse me, Sir. Dr Tulloch only calls them "the imaginative fertility of the consciousness of the time;" and as regards the Penninghame record, of which I have given a *verbatim* transcript in my book, the Principal concedes no more to Mr Napier than this, that—"it has evidently been surrounded with a considerable amount of fictitious embellishments."

Well, Sir Andrew, don't let us get into a dispute about words. I understand you to mean, that your old Wigtown friend, who, in his *simplicity*, made somewhat free with the name of the Saviour, insisted that all those "most startling passages," which the Principal pronounces to be "fictitious embellishments," are as true as the gospel, and that no man who holds by the faith of a Christian could, or should, doubt that kirk-session's story of the drowning of these women.

Sir, I have given you the precise words of the old Wigtown man.

And you offer him as a godly example and pure type of that Christian faith in the "Wigtown Martyrs," which "lives universally in the hearts of the peasantry in Galloway"?

Certainly I do.

You say, Sir Andrew, that the Penninghame minutes "preserve the tale as it was then popularly told, and when many *actual* eye-witnesses of the deed were still alive." But can you name any one who has left a record, directly from himself, of his *actual eye-witnessing*, and can you produce any such record? Have you caught ere a fly that *saw them die*, Sir Andrew; or is your proof by *eye-witnesses* only inferential?

If you will turn, Sir, to page 431 of my book, you will, I think, find your not very reasonable question very sufficiently answered. I there say: "The circumstance was a *matter of fact* as well established at the time as the history of the Revolution of 1688, although *suddenly* to find *legal* proof of it is a difficult matter. Such doubts might be raised about any thing at a distance of time of *two hundred* years by persons unacquainted with the locality,"—

Excuse my interrupting you, Sir Andrew; but why do you speak of being "suddenly" called upon for your proof? Is it not all recorded in your book published in 1864? I suspect your real difficulty is to meet the "Case for the Crown," in which the martyrdom in question is impugned on evidence by record, to which you make no allusion!

Sir, you think more of your "Case for the Crown" than I do; but allow me to proceed with my evidence, at page 431, as to *actual eye-witnesses* to the drowning. I there say: "A valued correspondent, Mr Broadfoot, West Mains of Baldoon, *deeply versed in traditionary lore*, and well read in *Galloway history*, thus writes to myself in 1862: 'Mr Napier having raised doubts as to whether these two women were drowned or not, I was induced to make inquiries of old people whether

they had ever heard of any one who had *actually seen* the women drowned? I was told by *Miss M'Kie*, an *old person* in Wigtown, that *Miss Susan Heron* had *told her* that her *grandfather* was on Wigtown sands on the day they were drowned; and that his *very words* were,—*The hail sands war covered wi' cluds o' folk a' gathered into clusters here and there, offering up prayers for the two women while they were being put down.* These Herons are an old race in the district. However, to make sure that the above story *could* be true, I examined their *grave-stones* in the old churchyard of Penninghame, and there I found that *Miss Susan Heron* died 19th February 1834, aged 87 years, and that her grandfather, *James Heron*, died 31st October 1758, aged 94 years, shewing he was twenty years of age when the women were drowned.'"

Well, Sir Andrew, this is the story written to you by your friend Mr Broadfoot, as having been *told him* by an old Miss M'Kie, as having been *told her* by an octogenarian Miss Heron, as having been *told her* by her grandfather, a nonogenarian Heron. Did this last old bird leave any written record of his own actual eye-witnessing?

Not that I am aware of.

Rather an unsatisfactory way this of getting at an actual eye-witness, Sir Andrew. Hearsay from one very old maid, of her hearsay, at least *thirty years before*, from another very old maid, of what had been told to the latter old maid by her Nestor of a grandfather. The eye-witnessing here comes through too many old barnacles, and probably none of the clearest. Can you not find us another old fly that saw them die, Sir Andrew? If "the hail sands were covered wi' *cluds* o' folk offering up prayers," the eye-witnesses must be as plenty as sand-eels!

Sir, I cannot raise the dead.

I would no more ask you to do that, Sir Andrew, than to set fire to the Thames. But please attend to this. There are *two* parochial records of this drowning scene—namely, *Penninghame* and *Kirkinner*, parishes which march with each other. The Penninghame version, 1711, which is that in your book, and from which I now quote (page 428), has it, that of the two women, "they did put the old woman *first* into the water, and when the water overflowed her, they asked Margaret Wilson what she thought of her, in that case. She answers, 'What do I see but Christ wrestling there; think ye that we are the sufferers? No, it is Christ in us, for he sends none a warfare at his own charges.'" Your version, Sir Andrew, then goes on to narrate, how, while tied to a stake in the flowing tide, the "virgin martyr of eighteen," who, it would seem, had both her bible and psalm-book in hand, *sang* psalm 25th, from the 7th verse, *read* the 8th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and *did pray*, and then the water covered her. You next proceed to tell us, following your Penninghame record, how the virgin was pulled out of the water again, bullied by Major Winram, commanding the royal troops, to swallow the oath of abjuration while her throat was full of salt water; how, in that condition, she refused to do so, at the same time calmly conversing with her relations, and making several evangelical speeches, as if performing a sacred drama, until the patience of Lagg, Winram, *et*

hoc genus omne, being as much exhausted as their innocent victim's breath, she was finally permitted to accept of her watery crown of martyrdom and glory, when "down her sacred trophies and herself sank in the envious flood"! Now, tell us, Sir Andrew, is *that* the scene which your nonogenarian eye-witness, the old Heron, swallowed, not through his bill, but his barnacles?

Sir, it sounds vastly like your own bombast. I can't find all that in my book.

Something there very like it, Sir Andrew, though not quite so lively. It is your bunkum translated into my bombast—six of one and half-a-dozen of the other. But I put the question for this reason. The kirk-session of *Kirkinner*, the parish immediately adjoining Penninghame, also took the greatest pains, in 1710, to collect the particulars of this martyrdom, which they minuted, April 15, 1711, in this form:—

"*Margaret Laughlison*, of known integrity and piety from her youth, aged about *eighty*, widow of John Milliken, wright in Drumjargan, was, *in or about* the year of God 1685, in her own house taken off her knees in prayer, and carried immediately to prison, and from one prison to another, without the benefit of light to read the Scriptures, was barbarously treated by dragoons, who were sent to carry her from Machirmore to Wigtown, and being sentenced by *Sir Robert Grier of Lagg* to be drowned at a stake within the flood mark, just below the town of Wigtown, for conventicle keeping and alledged rebellion, was, according to the said sentence, fixed to the stake till the tide made, and held down within the water by one of the town officers, by his halbert at her throat till she died."[1]

Now, Sir Andrew, you will observe, there is only one martyr here; the virgin is not even alluded to. You profess to have produced an eye-witness. Can you tell us whether that nonogenarian Heron was eye-witness to this marvellous martyrdom in its single, or in its double form? Did his visual orbs take it in, after the manner of Kirkinner, or after the manner of Penninghame? Pity if he did not see the Ophelia of the tragedy.

What I understand is, that old Mr Heron declared to his granddaughter, that he was an eye-witness of what I have recorded in my book from the Penninghame kirk-session minutes. Of course he must have seen all that happened, he could not have seen *less*.

But, Sir Andrew, some of these old martyr-mongers are apt to see *more* than what happened; especially if sometimes seeing double. According to your understanding of it, however, this old bird had really been an *eye-witness* to all those "*most startling* passages," which Principal Tulloch now admits to be lies,—I beg pardon—*fertilities?*

I am not bound, Sir, to dress my faith at Dr Tulloch's glass. But be so good as observe what I say at page 428 of my book, after recording the Penninghame version: "That there are *inaccuracies* in this *simple*

[1] See "Case for the Crown" (pp. 97 to 99), in which this account of the martyrdom was first brought to light.

account is very possible; but it is certainly correct in *the main.* Tradition is strong, clear, and unvarying upon the *chief points.*"

Odds fish and fanatics, Sir Andrew, do you call that Penninghame melo-dramatic, operatic, acquatic, and pneumatic performance a "simple account"? You might as well call Gladstone on the Irish Church, or Paradise Lost a simple account. Will you kindly tell us *which* are the "inaccuracies," *which* are the "chief points," and *what* is "the main."

I am by no means prepared to particularize; but I believe the case to be just what I have stated.

If *you* can't tell us, Sir Andrew, no man alive can. Perhaps "the main" was *seven.* That's in the dice at least. But you say that your blessed tradition is strong, clear, and unvarying upon the *chief points.* Yet I see nothing in this Penninghame romance about the now undisputed fact that these martyrs did petition the Privy Council to be allowed to take the abjuration oath, and to have their sentence remitted, all which was granted in terms of their petitions, and the petitioners recommended accordingly to the Sovereign for a free pardon by the whole Privy Council of Scotland. Is that not a "chief point" in the history of this martyrdom?

There is nothing about it in the Wigtownshire traditions.

I am quite aware of that, Sir Andrew, *nor in your book;* but there is something about it both in the Privy Council Register and in Wodrow. *Why* is there nothing about it in the Wigtownshire traditions?

I will not pretend to say.

When that "old person in Wigtown," Miss M'Kie, reported to your traditionary pundit, Mr Broadfoot, what she had gathered from the octogenarian and nonogenarian Herons, did this first old maid, in the traditionary sequence, know anything about the Privy Council pardon?

I cannot tell.

Did any of this venerable nest of old Herons know of it?

I am not aware.

Anything on their tombstones about it?

Certainly not.

Sir Andrew, you have a whole chapter in your traditionary chronicles, entitled "The Wigtown Martyrs," by way of *reply* to Mr Napier's "Memorials of Dundee." Will you explain why you make no allusion to the martyrs' petitions and *peccavi*, and their *consequent pardon* by the Privy Council, facts so prominent in Mr Napier's proofs? Is that not a "main point" in the story of the Wigtown martyrs?

It may be a main point in Mr Napier's work, but it is no point at all in a *tradition* which *proves* that the martyrs were drowned nevertheless. To record these Galloway traditions was the object of that chapter in my book.

You say that the tradition, as you give it from the Penninghame minutes, is "strong, clear, and *unvarying.*" How can you say that, when the tradition, as recorded by the adjacent parish of *Kirkinner*, is quite different?

I am not aware that it is so.

But compare the two accounts. In the Kirkinner minutes there is not the most remote allusion to Ophelia.

Neither is there to Hamlet.

You are too quick for me, Sir Andrew. But come now; can you reconcile your theory of an "unvarying" tradition, with the fact that it varies so essentially in the hands, respectively, of these two adjacent kirk-sessions?

Certainly. As stated in "History Vindicated," p. 42,—"As Margaret Wilson did not belong to *Kirkinner*, she is not mentioned in the account from that parish."

That cock won't fight, Sir Andrew; for old Meg, although belonging to *Kirkinner*, is particularly recorded by *Penninghame*. Whether these parishes gathered their record from *tradition*, or from *eye-witnesses*, they could not fail, *each* of them, to have gathered the *entire* story. Is it not a strange thing that one of these parishes should have *declined*, or *forborne*, to record the entire story, leaving out the very portion which was by far the most interesting, and by far the most important to the object of this grand Presbyterial scheme of kirk sufferings?

It is imperfectly recorded by the Kirkinner kirk-session, certainly. But it agrees in *the main;* and as Penninghame kirk-session took charge of the entire story, for historical purposes, Kirkinner was less particular.

I see, Penninghame took more pains with the "imaginative fertilities." That parish was further advanced in the science of martyrological agriculture than the neighbouring parish. I shall not detain you much longer, Sir Andrew. Pray how do you prove the *universality* of the tradition, as cultivated by Penninghame?

You will find what I say on that head at page 428 of my chapter on the Wigtown Martyrs:—"There are many *episodes* attaching to the tale which, no doubt, are *very absurd*, yet the fact of their being *firmly believed* in an age when *miraculous judgments were expected to follow crime*, is an additional *proof* of the *notoriety of the drowning scene.*"

A puzzling sentence that, Sir Andrew. It seems to me to say that there is no tradition, however absurd, in your hereditary kingdom of Galloway, that does not tend to prove the truth of the Penninghame tradition of the Wigtown martyrdom, the most absurd of them all.

Not so absurd as the "Case for the Crown," permit me to add, Sir.

Ah! Sir Andrew, you are down upon me there, like a hawk upon one of your old Herons. Will you kindly favour us with a specimen of your "absurd" but conclusive episodes?

You will find them, Sir, at pages 429 and 430:—"One of the constables who fastened the women to the stakes was called 'Bell'; he had shewn himself very unfeeling, and when asked afterwards *how the poor creatures behaved* on the awful struggle when the sea roared and foamed about them, answered jocularly,—'*Oh, they just clepped roun' the stobs like partons, and aye prayed,*'"—

Excuse the interruption, Sir Andrew, but how came the "constable" to be so questioned when all the world and his wife were there to see, and "relations" conversing with the virgin down to her very last gurgle?

Sir, I am not maintaining the "episode" as *truth*, but only as *proof.*

But pray allow me to proceed without further interruption. "Soon after, Bell's wife was brought to bed, when the houdie,"—

The who?

The *houdie*, Sir—the country female Sir James Simpson of the period and of the locality, if you prefer that phraseology—"exclaimed, '*The bairnie's clepped!*'—that is, the fingers grew firmly together. *Another* child was born, and *yet another;* and as each *little wretch* in turn was *clepped*, the most incredulous became convinced of the reality of the judgment. There are persons in Wigtown, *still alive*, who will *assure the inquirer* that they *have seen* descendants of this family afflicted with the *hereditary deformity*. And more, we have been *gravely assured* that a distant female relative in the country, in whom the curse appeared to have worn out—*she not being clepped herself*—removed to a distant parish, and there, *not long ago*, giving birth to a child, was greeted by the same unwelcome cry,—'*The bairnie's clepped.*'"

God help these Galloway bairnies, Sir Andrew, since even you, their hereditary Sheriff, have no kinder or more Christian name for the innocents than "*little wretch*"! We must not impugn the decrees of Providence, but if this constable, "who fastened the women to the stakes," only told the truth, it seems hard lines for his line that they should all be—*clepped*, I think you call it. Might it not be that he fastened *no* woman to a stake, and that this hereditary visitation was for *lying?*

Sir, I have given you the tradition as it exists in Galloway.

Well, Sir Andrew, have you ere another to give us?

Yes, one still more striking at p. 429. "A similar tradition tells that another *town-officer*, a sergeant, who was an active party at the execution, helped to raise up the half drowned *women*, to receive a useless offer of the test, and that on *their* refusal he pressed *their heads* down again with his halbert, crying, with savage glee, '*There*, tak' another drink *o't*, *my hearties*.'"

Excuse a momentary interruption of your intensely sensational narrative, Sir Andrew. You say that this town-officer pressed *both* their heads down with his halbert, old *Meg* and young *Meg*. But the *Kirkinner* version, in which alone any mention is made of a town-officer using his halbert, distinctly limits the whole martyrdom to the drowning of the old woman. How do you explain that?

The tradition I am narrating refers to the story as given in my book, which is the *Penninghame* version.

But the Penninghame version is, that old *Meg* was first put into the water, and drowned outright, in order to frighten the virgin, not out of her life, but into it. How, then, could the officer press both their heads down at the same time with his halbert?

Sir, you are unreasonably hypercritical. I must again remind you of what I say at page 428,—"That there are inaccuracies in this simple account is very possible; but it is certainly correct in the main. *Tradition* is strong, clear, and unvarying upon the chief points."

It would seem, Sir Andrew, not to be "chief points" in this martyrdom, whether there were two women, or only one, or in what manner

they were drowned. But I beg your pardon; pray go on with your simple account.

Which I hope, Sir, you will allow me to do without further interruption, as at page 428. "He (the town-officer, with his halbert) returned safe from the murderous job, but troubled by an extraordinary thirst. He drank, but his thirst was unquenchable. If going an errand, his unnatural craving obliged him to carry a *huge pitcher on his back*. If he crossed a stream, even before ribald companions, he was irresistibly impelled to kneel down, and, *like the men chosen by Gideon*, to lap water like a dog. *Medicine* was tried, but with no effect. As the wretch wandered about the country bearing his retributive burden,—now turning to curse a group of urchins who would follow to mock his sufferings,—now sprawling to moisten his swollen tongue in the filthy gutter,—even his old associates shrank from him with horror, while the people, who had sympathised with his poor victims, pointed him out as the example of a man who had directly dared the vengeance of Providence, and whose eternal sufferings had begun."

Sir Andrew, you call your Galloway traditions, which you have so fondly and faithfully recorded, *absurd*. But I must compliment you upon their being even more eloquent than marvellous. Bright's peroration on the doom of Church and State is not more picturesque, more convincing, more elevated in the tone of its Christian solemnity, or more to the purpose, than is that with which you have now favoured us. You say they gave "the wretch" *medicine* in vain. Was the water-cure not prescribed? But pardon me; perhaps you are not done?

Not quite, Sir. "The name of the man by whose information the women were arrested is remembered, and his memory execrated still. His descendants are reduced to poverty. *Not long since* one of them, getting into an altercation with a person in Wigtown, was thus taunted publicly:—'*I wadna like to have had a forebear who betrayed the Martyrs: I wadna be com'd of sic folk.*'"

Anything more, Sir Andrew?

Yes, at page 430,—"In Wigtown churchyard stand *three tombstones:* Tombstone No. 1, *erect*. Tombstone No. 2, *horizontal on four legs*. Tombstone No. 3, *erect*,—"[1]

Odds tombstones and table-turning, monuments, martyrs, mythifications, and mystifications,—spare us the description of those old stones, Sir Andrew, and the miserable scratchings on them. *How* and *when* they came there all the world know who have ever read "OLD MORTALITY." But rather give us some traditions of the *recovery of the bodies*, and the *interment* of these sainted sufferers just after the devouring tide had retired. Did old grandpapa Heron happen to mention that he *attended the funeral*, along with the "*cluds o' folk*" who were eye-witnesses of the drowning? Is there no tradition on that "main point"?

None that I am aware of.

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[1] For the Wigtown Martyrs' fictitious Tombstones and Epitaphs, see "Case for the Crown," section ix. part ii. pp. 134 to 139.

What a careless jade is *Tradition!* Who is the fortunate possessor of the bible and psalm-book which sank with the virgin?

I never heard that they were recovered.

What! are they not preserved in the parish along with the Penninghame minutes?

Not to my knowledge.

Ah! Sir Andrew, you would give a good deal for those relics?

Half my estate, Sir.

Then let us hope, for the sake of your estate, that they were swallowed by a Solway whale. Thank you much, Sir Andrew. I think that will do,—you may go; but don't forget your book,—I am sure the enlightened and grateful public never can.

Record versus *Tradition.*

Such, when we come to look into the hearts of its peasantry, appears to be the value of the Galloway argument of *tradition.* Under the extreme anxiety of a sect in Scotland not to lose hold of this sensational martyrdom,—hitherto most carelessly taken for granted by some eminent historians, although there really has never been a vestige of legitimate evidence produced in support of parochial romances which bear the stamp of falsehood on the very face of them,—even men of education and abilities appear to lose hold of common sense. And this *pseudo* tradition, of the most equivocal character in itself, is here relied upon, not as a mere corroboration of proof by contemporary records, but as *antagonistic* thereto. In this Wigtown war it is actually urged for the purpose of cutting down contemporaneous documentary evidence of the highest probative quality. Throughout this death-struggle of the fanatical calumnies which have so long disgraced the Church history of Scotland, the most *jejune* disregard, if not contempt, for the latter species of proof has been evinced in quarters from which better might have been expected. The original petition to the Privy Council from one of these women, praying to be allowed to take the oath she had refused, and live, is produced in reply to the *tradition* that they were executed because of their *persistent refusal* of that Government test. Dr Tulloch jauntily casts it aside as a document which "cannot be said to furnish any additional evidence against the fact of the martyrdom"!

The minister of Glasserton, with a bolder plunge into the profound of mythification, disposes of this record as a cunning device to *extort* submission from an illiterate old woman by a "friendly" notary public, who had "framed it to suit the views of Government"! The State Register of the *acta* of the Privy Council, containing the original record of the consequent pardon, conceived in the usual form of an indefinite reprieve awaiting the formal assent of the Crown,—but passed at a full sederunt of the Scotch Council, including the Prime Minister, the Lord Advocate, and a *quota* of the Supreme Judges,—is produced against a *tradition* that the petitioners were executed in pursuance of their sentence. The Principal of St Andrews, with a stroke of his academic pen, disposes of this record as an "*obviously* incomplete document—the dates are not filled in"! In reply to a *tradition* that these women were drowned *at Wigtown*, the State record of their pardon is again appealed to, as expressly proving that, of its date, the women were *not at Wigtown at all*, but in the custody and under the executive responsibility of the Magistrates of *Edinburgh*. A disingenuous practical attempt, on the part of a fanatical and reverend author, to mislead the public into a belief that the word used in the latent register is *Wigtown*, and not *Edinburgh*, having been detected and exposed in "Memorials of Dundee,"[1] Dr Tulloch, altogether ignoring that scandal, which he did not feel particularly interested to condemn, coolly meets the restored version with his own "cannot help thinking" that the word "Edinburgh" in that State record is "a *clerical error*, the mark of a *hastily concocted* and incomplete document"! In short, all proof by contemporaneous record is to be thrust aside, upon the most frivolous and even ignorant assumptions, to make way for a so-called *tradition*, in their struggles to trace which *up to the event itself* the martyrologists are completely at fault.

But we must now submit their arguments to a closer scrutiny.

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[1] See "Memorials of Dundee," vol. iii. p. 691; *note* on a fanatical work by "The Rev. James Anderson," entitled, "The Ladies of the Covenant," published in 1851. The liberty therein taken with the public records will be more particularly noticed in a subsequent page of this Recapitulation.

The investigation is both troublesome and tedious. But History is being vindicated after a fashion, and by a sect, that might drive her off the pedestal of truth in Scotland altogether; and no pains should be spared to redeem her from the fanatical counterfeit that would fain usurp her place.

The Petition of Margaret Lauchlison praying to be allowed to take the Oath of Abjuration, and to have her sentence remitted.

"Unto his Grace my Lord High Commissioner, and remanent Lords of his Majesties Most Honourable Privie Counsell;

"The humble supplication of Margaret Lachlisone, and now prisoner in the Tolbuith of Wigton:

"Sheweth:

"That whereas I being justlie condemned to die, by the Lords Commissioners of his Majesties Most Honourable Privie Counsell and Justiciore, in ane Court holden at Wigtoune, the threttein day of *Aprryle instant*, for my not disowning that traiterous apollogetical declaration laitlie affixed at severall paroch churches within this kingdom, and my refusing the oath of abjuration of the saymein, which was occasioned by my not perusing the saymein: And now, I having considered the said declaratione, doe acknowledge the saymein to be traiterous, and tends to nothing but rebellione and seditione, and to be quyt contrair unto the wrytin word of God; and am content to abjure the same with my whole heart and soull:

"May it therefoir please your Grace, and remanent Lords as said is, to take my cais to your serious consideratione, being about the age of thre-scor ten years, and to take pitie and compassione on me, and recall the foirsaid sentence so justlie pronouncet against me; and to grant warrant to any your Grace thinks fit to administrat the oath of abjuration to me, and upon my taking of it to order my liberatione; and your supplicant shall leive heirafter ane good and faithful subject in tyme cuming; and shall frequent the ordinance and live regularly, and give what other obedience your Grace and remanent Lords sall preseryve thereanent: and your petitioner shall ever pray.

"*De mandato dictæ Margaretæ Lauchlisone scribere necien. ut asserult, ego, Gulielmus Moir, notarius publicus, subscribo testante hoc meo chyrographo.*"

"J. Dunboir, *witness.*

"Will. Gordoun, *witness.*"

The minister of Glasserton's commentary upon this petition is characteristic. Stated shortly, it amounts to this:—The petitions of these two martyrs,—for our reverend opponent *admits*

that under the circumstances of the reprieve, there must have been a similar petition presented for the younger martyr,—were not truly their own petitions, were not expressive of their own wills, but were concocted for them *against their wills*, with the tyrannical and unchristian object of cheating them out of that most precious jewel in their crown of glory, namely, their illegal and merciless, but transcendental doom. If we read aright this strange commentary, it resolves into something like the famous piscatory refinement in cruelty, of treating with extreme tenderness, and as if *loving it*, the devoted worm about to be impaled. But the Glasserton theory is by no means very intelligible, and we can only be sure of doing it proper justice at the expense of an uncomfortably long extract from "History Vindicated," p. 21. The italics are in the original.

"Mr Napier says that the two women did petition the Privy Council for their lives, owning the justice of their sentence, and promising to take the abjuration, and conform to Episcopal worship; that they were removed to Edinburgh before the 30th April, and, at that date, reprieved by the Privy Council, to another date left blank; that they were recommended to the King for pardon, and were *actually pardoned and liberated*. But how much of this has Mr Napier actually proved? *First*, Did the two women petition the Government? There was lately found in the Register House, Edinburgh, the original petition of Margaret Lauchlison to the Privy Council, duly authenticated by William Moir, notary public, the petitioner herself being unable to write. No petition from Margaret Wilson has been found; but the fact of her being included in the reprieve of the Privy Council affords reasonable grounds to believe that she had also petitioned, *or been petitioned for*, in similar terms. No one, however, can assuredly affirm that these petitions *expressed the sentiments of the two women, or that it was with their concurrence and approval that petitions expressed in such terms were sent to the Government.* At their trial they resolutely refused the Government oath, and allowed sentence of death to be recorded against them, when they had every reason to expect that they would be sent to immediate execution, in terms of the law under which they were tried. It is not easy to believe, that no sooner were they relieved from the fear of immediate death than they owned the justice of their sentence, and offered to comply with all the Government asked them to do. The petition which has been found is evidently not the petition of the illiterate old woman as regards its *style*; and it may be supposed that it is as little her's as regards its *matter* and *substance*. The friendly hand that drew it, framed it to suit the views of the Government, and to obtain their pardon, in the hope that the old woman would succumb, and accept of her life on the terms on which alone she could be pardoned.

"With regard to Margaret Wilson, too, it may well be believed that any petition in her favour was the work of her friends, and that she never consented to renounce by solemn oath those principles for her steadfast adherence to which she had been condemned. This accords with the statement, that in prison she wrote 'a vindication of her refusing to save her life by taking the abjuration, and engaging to conformity.'—(*Wodrow*). Her writing such a vindication implied efforts made on her behalf, but without her consent; efforts that might have been successful had she consented to the terms. The most natural and probable theory is, that both women were petitioned for by their friends, in the hope that, should the Government give a favourable answer, they might be brought to comply so far with the demands of the Government, that their lives would be spared. That they who, in the awe-inspiring presence of a court of justice, could firmly hear their death-sentence rather than take the oath tendered to them, should immediately thereafter recant their creed in the abject terms that William Moir puts into the mouth of the elder prisoner, is neither natural nor probable."

Our Vindicator of History entertains strange notions of nature and probability. *Unnatural*,—that two foolish women, of this obscure class of rebellious fanatics, under the influence of such false prophets as Cameron, Renwick, and Shields, should be obstinate before sentence and cry *peccavi* after it? *Improbable*,—that having staked their lives under the prompting of apostles of sedition to whom a living Christian was as nothing to a dead martyr, provided it was not one of themselves,—they should desire to redeem their lives when reflecting on their doom? But a Wigtown minister cannot abide the idea of these Wigtown martyrs becoming themselves instrumental in proving that they were not martyred. Were they to rise from the dead to refute the calumny, these fond zealots would say,—"Go get ye to your graves, and leave your story in the hands of those who know more about it than you do." There is no end to the illogical assumptions, extravagant theories, and puerile devices, disregard of established facts, and persistent ignoring of all refutation, which has been engendered by fanatical faith in this ridiculous martyrdom. To part with it rends the heart-strings of a covenanting divine.

Fortunately, the original of this petition has been discovered; but only of late years. It was first produced, in its *complete* integrity, in "Memorials of Dundee." It bears to have been drawn up by a notary-public, a sworn and highly responsible official of

the law, at the express requisition of the convict herself while in the Tolbooth of Wigtown. She declares she cannot write. The notary adds his official docquet, in latin, stating his mandate, and authenticating the petition as written by himself. The minister of Glasserton, at his wit's end for an argument, offers this in reality puerile remark,—"It is a remarkable circumstance that it does not appear from the docquet that the petition was read to the old woman, or even subscribed in her presence." But the intelligent reader will probably be satisfied with the fact, that the regularity of the proceeding is further attested by two witnesses, whose names are at the petition. Such was the cruel conspiracy against this poor woman's crown of martyrdom, a conspiracy however, which, according to the minister of Glasserton, did not succeed after all.

This petition being one of the loose remnants of warrants of the Privy Council, accidentally preserved in the Register House, there is no reason to suppose that Wodrow had ever seen it. Indeed, it is obvious from his own history that he knew nothing whatever about it, which is just another circumstance demonstrative of the reckless and prejudiced ignorance under which he so greedily adopted all the rodomontade about this martyrdom he received from the minister of Penninghame.

But you, reverend Vindicator, are even more impregnable against documentary refutation than Wodrow himself. Your argument to meet this formidable production is the most perverse with which the truth of history was ever assailed. You are curious in style, and I hold you well excused for your prefatory announcement that you mean to abstain from imitating mine, and prefer substituting the sound logic in which you consider me deficient. But really, when you come to argue that "the petition which has been found is evidently not the petition of the illiterate old woman as regards its style, and it *may be supposed* that it is as little hers as regards its *matter* and *substance*,"—your logic shews even more extraordinary than my style. Who ever imagined that this old woman, who could not even write her own name, one of the humblest species of the *genus Mause*, could possibly have exhibited her own native style, in this petition for life to the Lords of the Privy

Council? And can it, in common sense, be maintained, that the petition not exhibiting the old woman's own style cannot be supposed to be her petition "as regards its *matter* and *substance*"? What do you suppose her own style to have been,—which doubtless was exhibited to perfection before the High Court of Justiciary at Wigtown? Not impossibly, reverend Sir, it may have presented a *de haut gout* resemblance to the sentiments at least in that remarkable passage of your own, in which you treat us to the following somewhat alarming homily on the subject of refusing the oath which government had opposed to *threatened murder and assassination.* You say:—

"Some may think *that oath* a very simple affair, which any woman peaceably disposed might have taken. *They* did not think so, and *that was enough.* They thought it would be morally wrong to swear that oath,—and since *they thought so*, it would have been *sin* in them to take it. To swear a solemn oath is not quite so simple a thing as to eat flesh; yet there is the highest authority for believing, that he who even doubteth the lawfulness of the act is condemned if he eat. Thus *it is clear* that an act may be lawful and right in itself, and yet a *sin* in him *whose conscience does not allow it.*"—(*Hist. Vind.* p. 5.)

"Angels and ministers of grace defend us," is Vindicator a Fenian? This homily being interpreted just means, that to obey law and order is a sin, or not a sin, according as any individual conscience, however warped or ignorant, does, or does not, "*allow it*"! If you cherish such principles as these in the centre of your head, (for I will not believe it to be in your heart), the minister of Glasserton runs a greater risk of being mistaken for a "head centre," than the Sheriff of Dumfriesshire for a "Mexican official under Juarez." But I do indeed believe, that you, worthy Sir, are only a Fenian in your *pamphlet*,—never in your pulpit. In this polemical homily, we have, not your ministry, only your martyrology,—not your loyalty, only your *logic.* And what, after all, do you *really know* about the consciences of these two women who stand for your text? You fit your *dramatis personæ* with any kind of conscience that may happen to suit your argument, as if you kept a broker's shop of consciences; and so you play off this old woman's *dramatic* conscience, with which *you* have fitted her for the nonce, against the plain meaning and words of her own carefully authenticated petition for pardon and life. But what if the

consciences with which you deal so logically, and so theologically, be attuned to murder and assassination? We have no reason to believe anything quite so bad of old Saint Margaret of the Solway. We accept her own petition as good evidence of the contrary. But had it been otherwise, this strange doctrine would suffice to sanctify her. If a lawful act be a *sin* in any one who *thinks* it unlawful, we see no escape from the alarming converse, that an unlawful act is a *virtue* in him, or her, who thinks it lawful,—a most dangerous doctrine—we had almost used the Catholic epithet—preach it who may.

But it is more to the purpose that we should point out how completely the old woman's petition contradicts the calumnious romance of the Penninghame Session-book. She there tells her own simple story, like a voice from the dead. She tells us why she was condemned. She says it was for "not disowning" Renwick's infamous declaration,—which she declares she had never read, and doubtless could not read,—and for "*my refusing the oath of abjuration of the same.*" Now, compare this with the Penninghame fable :—

"After their imprisonment for some considerable time, Mr David Graham, Sheriff, the laird of Lagg, Major Winram, and Captain Strachan, called ane assize, indicted these *three women*, viz., Margaret M'Lauchland, Margaret Wilson, *Agnes Wilson*, to be guilty of the rebellion at *Bothwell Bridge*, *Airdsmoss*, *twenty* field conventicles, and *twenty* house conventicles. Yet it was *well known* that none of these women ever were within twenty miles of Bothwell or Airdsmoss; and *Agnes* Wilson being *eight* years of age the time of Airdsmoss could not be deep in the rebellion then; nor her sister (Margaret) of *thirteen* years of age, and twelve at Bothwell Bridge its time. The assize did sit, and *brought them in guilty*, and the Judges sentenced them to be tied to palisados fixed in the sand, within the flood mark of the sea, and there to stand till the flood overflowed and drowned them. They received their sentence without the least discouragement, with a composed and smiling countenance, judging it their honour to suffer for Christ's truth, that he is alone King, and Head of his Church."

Be it observed, that the child of thirteen is expressly included in all this narrative, which we have quoted *verbatim* from the original Penninghame kirk-session minutes of 15th February 1711. May we not suggest that the demeanour, language, and theological tenets, attributed in this parochial composition to these martyrs, *including the child*, are far more

obviously a fiction of the conventicles, than that the old woman's petition is a fiction of a notary public "to suit the views of the Government"?

The petition of the younger martyr has not been recovered; but as she is named with the old woman in the same record of their "material pardon," there is no reason whatever to doubt that she had petitioned at the same time, and in similar terms. Indeed this is expressly admitted by our reverend opponent. Well, is it true, or is it false, that this virgin martyr was "brought in guilty" of being at Bothwell Bridge, Airdsmoss, twenty field conventicles, and twenty house conventicles; or was she, too, only condemned for refusing to take the abjuration oath? Can we obtain any evidence on that point? Let us see.

Wodrow tells us, that, "During her imprisonment, Margaret Wilson *wrote a large letter* to her relations, full of a deep and affecting sense of God's love to her soul, and an entire resignation to the Lord's disposal. She likewise added a vindication of her refusing to save her life by taking the abjuration, and engaging to conformity: Against both she gives arguments with a solidity of judgment far above one of her years and education." The minister of Glasserton, in the passage already quoted, would fain assume that this letter was written as a heroic remonstrance against having "been petitioned for," and as *repudiative* of the "material pardon" which the Privy Council had recorded in her favour. It is much more likely, however, that if such a letter was written, it was prior to her sentence, and while she was incarcerated in the Tolbooth of Wigtown before her trial. For be it observed, that as this was a *maiden of letters*, there could have been no petition presented in her name which had not been read over by herself, and verified with her own signature. But where is this wonderful epistle? We should like to have considered its date,—and its *style*,—but have searched for it in vain through many volumes of Wodrow's manuscripts. He prefers commenting upon it, in his history, to producing it. It would appear, however, that there really was some such letter, and that Wodrow had it, or at least knew where it was to be had. In one of the many folio volumes of his MSS., collected and arranged by himself, we find a paper entitled, "A List of

Testimonies of Honest Sufferers from *anno* 1679 to 1688." It is merely a list, however, of the titles of these "testimonies," none of which accompany this index, which is neither signed nor dated. But it must have been written after Sir John Dalrymple's martyrdom of Renwick (on the 17th February 1688); for the last item in the list is this,—"The last words of Mr James Renwick, who suffered *anno* 1688." Obviously this had been written in some year *subsequent* to 1688. Now, one of the items in the list is thus expressed, —"A letter from Margaret Wilson, who was drowned by order of *Colonel Douglas*, and *Laird of Lage*, at Wigtown, *anno* 1685, *purely* for refusing the then oath of abjuration." In this phraseology we recognise just another of the many vulgar echoes of Alexander Shields' fabrication in 1690, the falsity of which has already been demonstrated.

This adminicle of evidence is not without importance. We thus learn that Margaret Wilson was *condemned* "purely" for refusing the oath of abjuration, which tallies exactly with the old woman's petition. That is manifestly the truth of the case; and, consequently, the Penninghame kirk-session minutes are, in this particular also, *proved to be circumstantially false*.[1]

The Oath of Abjuration could not have been offered to the Wigtown women at their alleged martyrdom, because they had previously taken it as the condition precedent of their pardon.

It seems necessary to premise a little historical detail as to what the Oath of Abjuration really was. Being a favourite topic of fanatical declamation and abuse, many who do not care to investigate such subjects for themselves, carelessly settle down into a vague idea that it was some atrocious tyranny of the Government of Scotland, in the latter days of the fallen dynasty, and that subjecting *women* to it was the *acme* of the atrocity. The minister of Glasserton has made great play upon this docile disposition in the general readers of such unpalatable polemics. We have already taken occasion to enter

[1] Vol. xxxiii., No. 141 of Wodrow's MSS., *Advoc. Lib.*

our own humble protest against one of our reverend opponent's strange homilies on the subject. In another passage, he also repeats, in reference to these mythical martyrs, and with all the emphasis of italics,—"*They would rather die than sin against God.* That was their religion, and for that they suffered. Was not that true religion, and were they not sufferers for the truth—martyrs in the proper sense of the term?" They were no such thing. Had they really so suffered—which they wisely *did not*—they would not have been "martyrs in the proper sense of the term." They would have fallen under the category of simple fools misled by great rogues. Alexander Shields was a chief prompter of these martyrdoms,—which, however, he declined for himself. He loved not such grinning honours as he urged upon poor women. He took the abjuration oath to *save his own life*, and then fled, howling, to the hills.[1] The great Whig counsel, Fountainhall, has left us a juster appreciation of these *soi-disant* martyrs. In reference to his own clients, of that poor class upon whom such false prophets preyed, he says,—"The cause must be very commendable, and justly and clearly founded on the word of God, e'er a man can be esteemed a *martyr* for suffering in it. *Non pœna, sed causa, facit martyrem.* And a martyr ought to have a clear cause, and a humble frame and preparation of

[1] Alexander Shields, after taking the oath of abjuration, by which his life was saved, escaped out of prison, and fled to the hills, where he joined Renwick and the "Society People." He there redeemed his character as a shining light, by a sermon and a prayer (blasphemously absurd) delivered before Renwick and his murderous crew, of which we have an account from Renwick himself that provokes a smile. He says, in one of his fanatical letters, after the fugitive Shields had joined him,—"I was greatly refreshed with what he spoke from Rom. xii. 12; especially with what he had in prayer, with a heavy lamentation, to this purpose,—'I cannot longer contain, but must confess unto the Lord, before this people, I am ashamed to offer my body a living sacrifice *to Thee*, yet I must do it; for I, a prisoner, and a preacher, *might have been a martyr*, and in glory *with Thee* and thy glorified martyrs above; but I sinfully and shamefully *saved my life* with *disowning thy friends*, and *owning thy enemies;* and it will be *a wonder*, if ever *Thou* put such an *honourable opportunity* in my hand again.'" —(*Renwick's Letters.*) Shields himself took mighty good care of that. Eventually he went abroad, and died in exile. Renwick was hanged under the *regime* of Sir John Dalrymple when Lord Advocate. See "Case for the Crown," pp. 78, 79.

spirit, and a *knowledge of what he dies for.*" We prefer that homily to the minister of Glasserton's.

The Oath of Abjuration, 1684-5.

This Oath of Abjuration was a device (whether of good policy or no, according to more advanced ideas of government, is not the question), hastily projected, by the sorely tried Government of Scotland, at a most alarming crisis. It was absolutely incumbent on the Privy Council, unless they chose to deliver the country into the hands of a ruthless anarchy,—whose doctrine was, that to abstain from assassination would be a sin, because *they thought* the perpetration of it a virtue,—that some stringent measures should be instantly taken to protect the community from the effects of Renwick's murderous proclamations, anonymously affixed to various church-doors, and market-crosses, throughout Scotland. That flagrant treason had already, in several instances of the greatest enormity, commenced to fulfil its avowed mission of murder by assassination. This, too, at midnight while their victims were in bed.[1] As the Lord Advocate afterwards expressed it, in his Vindication of Government,—"No man who served the King could know whether or not his murderer was at his elbow." The danger to the throne, to every member of the Government, and to the lieges generally, was infinitely greater at that time in Scotland, under the regime of the conventicle preachers and pamphleteers,—of whom it is that Lord Macaulay says,—"if any person is inclined to suspect that I have exaggerated the *absurdity* and *ferocity*, of these men, I would advise him to read two books which will convince him that I have rather softened, than overcharged the portrait—Shields' *Hind let Loose*, and *Faithful Contendings Displayed*,"—than in our own time, at the worst crisis of Fenian agitation in England, or agrarian atrocities in Ireland. The Scottish *Thuggee* secret council (whose "head-centre" was the "Society People"), comprehended the instigators, the perpetrators, and the glorifiers, of the assassination of the venerable Archbishop in the

[1] See Fountainhall's notes on these atrocious midnight murders, "Case for the Crown," pp. 22, 23.

arms of his daughter. Their excuse for such deeds, namely, pretended oppression and cruel treatment of unoffending subjects, is even more calumniously false than the same sort of apology sometimes claimed for cowardly assassinations in Ireland, in the present day. The real offence of the Restoration was the removing from the ministry such men as those whom Lord Macaulay so severely characterises. It was as if a menagerie had been let loose upon the land. Grahame of Claverhouse, in the midst of his arduous duty of reducing to law and order the most disturbed districts in Scotland, which he effected with marvellous tact, firmness, and forbearance, and without shedding a drop of blood, thus writes to Queensberry, in 1682, from Dumfriesshire (of which he had been appointed Sheriff-depute),—"Did the King and the Duke know what those rebellious villains they call *ministers* put in the heads of the people, they would think it necessary to keep them out." Every succeeding year justified this alarm and indignation. In November 1684, the Lord Clerk Register (Sir George Mackenzie of Cromarty) reports, to the same Prime Minister, "a paper affixed on the Cross of Linlithgow, declaring war with the Government, and promising to kill us all." He adds,—"Since we find that there is a party *declaring war*, who *lurk within us*, we think on a *strict inquiry*, for *all the nation*, who will not forswear these opinions." And he concludes with this caution to Queensberry himself,—a state of matters which we hope may never overtake our country again,—"For God's sake take care of yourself; for now that these villains are at the utmost dispair, they will act as devils, to whom they belong. I shall leave to write a long letter, which I intended, for now I think all other matters are to be left till these *wild cats* are catched." [1]

This well-founded alarm it was that gave rise to the Government measure of the Abjuration Oath. Accordingly, a royal "Proclamation against a treasonable Declaration," (Renwick's), was issued on the 30th December 1684, injoining all the lieges moving about the country, and all of whom it might be required, to provide themselves with a legal certificate, of having

[1] See "Memorials of Dundee," vol. ii. p. 65.

abjured (in terms of the prescribed oath) being in any way *art and part* in those murderous manifestoes, attached to the church-doors and market-crosses of Scotland. With becoming deliberation and judgment, the Lord Advocate advised the Privy Council to take the opinions of the fifteen Judges to guide them as to the law of the measures contemplated for the instant protection of the State and the people. These Judges, comprising men of the highest intellect and calm judgment in the land,[1] returned a unanimous opinion,—"that a *libel*, in the terms of the said query, is relevant to infer the crime of treason, as *art and part*, of the said treasonable Declaration, against the refusers." This stringent but not cruel law showed no respect of persons. It was necessary to make it equally applicable to high and low, rich and poor, male and female. It was expressly limited, however, to those who were "past the age of sixteen,"—a considerate and rational exception, in favour of tender years, which the fabricators of the Penninghame romance had overlooked in their piteous tale of a girl "not thirteen," condemned to death for refusing the oath in question. Nor were women, however seditious and disorderly, *ever* dealt with in the spirit of persecution. *The very reverse is the case.* That there was a law, by which a female *might* be drowned for refusing the oath of abjuration, is no evidence whatever of a cruel disposition on the part of Government. The instruction in which *drowning* happens to be mentioned in relation to women, was issued for the direction of the High Commissioners of Justiciary, perambulating the most treasonable districts. It was an instruction of forbearance and humanity. Considering what females, of all conditions, had done, and were ever doing, to promote murder, and dethrone the King, it was impossible to enact that no woman was to be brought under the law of the abjuration oath. But the Royal Commissioners were instructed to avoid, if possible, having anything to do with female State delinquents, except of the most disorderly and dangerous class; and, in any event, no female was to suffer the usual death of a traitor: "But at this time

[1] See their names, and the terms of the Abjuration Oath which they sanctioned, "Case for the Crown," p. 25.

you are not to examine any women, but such as have been active in such courses in a *signal manner;* and those are to be drowned." *No woman ever was drowned, under these Royal Commissions of Justiciary.* The minister of Glasserton admits, and founds an argument upon the admission, that if the Wigtown martyrs *did not* so suffer, there was no woman whatever drowned under that regime. He argues, that the general accusation of "drowning of women," so often repeated in conventicle pamphlets, could not fail to mean "these two women," for he says, "*there was no other case of the kind, of which they* (the Government) *could be accused.*" Well, then, that at least proves the *general* accusation to be a falsehood. But the fact is, that the *ad captandum* word, *drowning,* was at once seized upon by the mendacious purveyors for the Orange invasion, and the ringing of the changes upon that gross fiction "the drowning of women" was persistently continued. The Principal of St Andrews, the minister of Glasserton, and Sir Andrew Agnew, are ringing them yet,—not at all aware, (as we have already shewn, and shall have occasion to prove more fully in the sequel) that this accusation was first applied not to King James, but to his predecessor *Charles the Second,*—under whose government, as the minister of Glasserton distinctly admits, no such case ever occurred. But our unpatriotic martyrologists, would fasten for ever upon the character of the Scottish nation a ridiculous fable of cruelty to females, in the fanatical form of a melodramatic tragedy of drowning, as public as a Spanish bull-fight,—"The hail sands covered wi' cluds o' folk, a' gathered into clusters here and there, offering up prayers for the two women while they were being put down"—and this in the face of a pardon by the Privy Council! And yet, at this very time, the same government was continually evincing anxiety to leave women out of the question of sedition or treasonable contumacy altogether. For while, notwithstanding the humane exception in favour of female delinquents, quoted above, this brutal spectacle is said to have been enacted on the 11th of May 1685, what do we find of date just *two days later?* "Act for the test, May 13th 1685,"—being a renewal of the test prescribed by the sixth Act of the Parliament 1681, a renewal, too, of most extensive

application, in which, however, this rational and consistent exception appears,—"It is always declared that this Act *extends not to women.*"

It is manifest, from the nature and origin of the abjuration oath, that it was a test which could only be taken once. If submitted to, there was no room for repeating the operation in that particular case. It was *un fait accompli.* The party might, indeed, lapse into any amount of treason, and get hanged, or drowned, for that same. But it could not be the special treason of having refused the oath of abjuration. If Alexander Shields had been caught he would have been hanged, but not for that. There was no such crime in the abstract, as retracting, or recanting, that oath, or repenting the having taken it. No one at all acquainted with the history of that test could fall into such a mistake.

Notwithstanding the credit it has obtained with some historians who ought to have probed it better, whenever a little trouble is taken to examine, and test, this Penninghame story, it is found to be absolutely teeming with evidences of its own falsity. Yet, strange to say, it is *vouched*, (though certainly not *proved*), by certain parochial authorities whom Dr Tulloch describes as "grave and respected men who would have shrunk from a falsehood with abhorrence." And, stranger still, Dr Tulloch himself has been constrained to admit that their record bears the stamp of falsehood on the face of it! We need not quarrel with the niceties of language in which the Principal is pleased to couch his confessions, and his annoyance. But these grave and respected men, whom the minister of Glasserton, on the other hand, upholds as witnesses so strictly contemporary that, if they were not eye-witnesses of the scene, (which not one of them pretended to be), they *might* have been so,—were actually *ignorant of the real history of their own martyrs!* They knew nothing of their *pardon*—they knew nothing of their *petitions.* Yet there is no room whatever for rational doubt that these women petitioned to be *allowed to take* the oath they had refused, as the *condition precedent* of their pardon—that they had taken the oath accordingly, and received the pardon they prayed for. If these *quasi* sacred chroniclers of Penninghame were infallible, as the Principal of

St Andrews and the minister of Glasserton would have us believe, certainly they were not inspired. It is a most pregnant fact, that the minister of Penninghame was entirely ignorant both of the "material pardon," and the petition which obtained it, when he handed that marvellous page of history to their appointed historiographer. . It would be unjust to suppose he was cognisant of, and yet *withheld* from Wodrow, facts so essential to a right understanding of the martyrdom in question. For, that Wodrow was ignorant of that state of the case, and only discovered it after his reverend purveyor was in his grave, there cannot be a doubt. *He tell us so himself.* And even Wodrow, so long as he lived, never knew that other essential fact that the women had petitioned the Privy Council, crying *peccavi.* That they had done so, the minister of Glasserton is compelled to admit. He says,—"There was lately found in the Register House the original petition of Margaret Lauchlison to the Privy Council, duly authenticated by William Moir, notary public, the petitioner herself being unable to write. No petition from Margaret Wilson has been found; but the fact of her being included in the reprieve of the Privy Council affords reasonable grounds to believe that she had also petitioned." And,—"There is *no doubt* that the *petitions*, in favour of the two women, *obtained for them* on the 30th of April a reprieve by the Privy Council." Well then, on what terms? The petition recovered informs us. It bears, *inter alia*, that the applicant prays the Lord High Commissioner, and other Lords of the Privy Council, to "grant warrand to any your Grace thinks fit *to administrat the oath of abjuration to me;* and, *upon my taking it*, to order my liberation." Now, supposing the Privy Council to assent to this,—and the idea of their not assenting is, under the circumstances of this inconsequential case, a mere absurdity,—there was but one form in which they could do so. They would authorise the oath, which these convicts had been condemned for refusing, to be administered to them in terms of their own petitions, and upon their fulfilling that essential condition, grant them a "material pardon" in the form of recommending them, through the two joint Secretaries of State in London, to the Sovereign, unconditionally, for absolute

pardon. Moreover, all this would be done *at head-quarters*, as we shall presently find. Wodrow, however, was altogether ignorant of these petitions when he recorded the Penninghame fabrications. This is manifest, from his own rambling and silly "conjectures," how in the world it happened that the women came to be pardoned after all. For Wodrow never doubted that it was a free pardon. Groping for light on the subject, he says, very incoherently,—"*If I may conjecture*, Gilbert Wilson, when he, *as we heard*, after the sentence of *all the three*, made application at Edinburgh, *seems* to have prevailed as to *all the three*, and the case was *extremely favourable*." But we now find that Wodrow's *conjecture* was utter nonsense. That, (which indeed was a mere cobweb of his own brain), was *not* the history of the pardon. The *child* had neither been condemned nor tried; and the two women had been pardoned in terms of their own petitions.

It were waste of time and words to hunt the worthy minister of Glasserton through all his little doubles and dodges, all his guesses, quirks, and quibbles, that the reprieve of these women was not of the nature of a pardon at all. Compelled to admit the reprieve as it stands on the Register,—with this exception, however, that one very inconvenient word in it must be *assumed* a *clerical error*,—our reverend opponent maintains it to mean a mere temporary stay of execution, in order to afford a little time to test the sincerity of their desire to take the abjuration oath! Shortly stated, his argument is this: The reprieve was not a pardon in consequence of the convicts having now taken the oath they had been condemned for refusing, but a mere temporary reprieve, *until* the oath should be offered to them again, as a tentative measure. But it is impossible to do justice to our reverend opponent's logic without quoting his own words, with his own italics:—

"It may be thought that the fact of a reprieve being granted, and a recommendation to the Crown for a pardon being agreed to by the Privy Council, is proof that, before the date of their reprieve, they must have taken the abjuration. Would the Council reprieve, and recommend to be pardoned, persons who had not yet abjured those treasonable principles for not disowning which they had been condemned? To this it may be answered, that, if the Council did at all entertain the petitions forwarded to them on behalf of the two prisoners at Wigtown, craving

that they might be allowed to take the abjuration, with a view to the remission of their sentence, *the deliverance of the Council necessarily was in the form of a reprieve.* No one could administer the abjuration to prisoners under sentence without the authority of the Council; and the granting of such authority by the Council was in fact a reprieve. It implied that the Council were willing to spare their lives, if the oath were taken. At the same time the defective form of the reprieve shewed that the Council were sufficiently wary. Such a reprieve was no bar to the execution of the sentence, if the prisoners did not comply with the terms on which their lives were offered to them."—(*Hist. Vind.*, p. 25.)

It was scarcely necessary to expend those italics on the above paragraph. There can be no question whatever that "the deliverance of the Council necessarily was in the form of a *reprieve.*" Technically and constitutionally, in the simplest and most obvious case for pardon that could possibly be conceived (which is precisely the character of the case in hand), the actual *pardoner*, the real source of mercy, for those who were dead in the eye of law, was the Sovereign in London. *Reprieve* was the only word available to the Privy Council in Scotland. But when the reverend logician proceeds to put this interpretation upon the reprieve in question, that it was simply "an authority by the Council" to "administer the abjuration to prisoners under sentence,"—with all respect for the minister of Glasserton, we must take leave, in the interest of true History, to impugn that gloze as being neither more nor less than nonsense. It is perilled in the very teeth of the plain words of the recorded pardon to the contrary. How is it possible that when the Privy Council of Scotland, at a full sederunt, including His Majesty's Advocate for His Majesty's interest, "recommended the said Margaret Wilson and Margaret Lauchlison to the Lords Secretaries of State, to interpose with his most sacred Majesty for the royal remission to them," no more could be meant than an *authority from* the Privy Council to offer them the oath of abjuration once more? How is it possible to conceive that they would have decreed that merciful recommendation, expressed in those simple unqualified terms, and finally recorded in the State Register, extended from the original warrant, unless the women had fulfilled the *condition precedent*, which they themselves had proposed in their petitions? Who ever heard of such a recommendation, from the Government to the Crown, being registered

in such terms, while the Government itself was still *in dubio* whether the convict was to be pardoned or executed? And even were it possible to read this as a mere hypothetical recommendation, still depending upon the obedience of the condemned, would it have been suffered to stand for ever recorded in the Register of the Privy Council, as an *ex facie* "material pardon," *unevacuated* by any *subsequent order* relating to these women, emanating either from King or Council, although (as the story is) they had eventually gone to death defying the law? Or, supposing that reprieve was simply an authority to administer the oath of abjuration, would such authority have been in the absurd form of ordering the captain of the guard at the execution to offer it to a girl tied to a stake in the Blednoch, and choking under the rushing tide of the Solway?

It must be remembered, moreover, that although a temporary reprieve for the special purpose of inquiry, or further consideration, is not a pardon, there are cases in which *reprieve* and *pardon* are convertible terms. Manifestly this is one of them. Let us illustrate this by reverting to an example which we must again press upon the attention of our readers.

In 1682 Christian Fyffe was condemned to death for personally and violently assaulting a clergyman in his own church, and publicly denouncing the King. Both Wodrow and Crookshanks claim her as a Grassmarket martyr. The latter says expressly,—"She was sentenced to be hanged on the 7th of April, *which was done accordingly.*" Now, what do we learn from the Whig Fountainhall, who did not miss *this* story? He thus chronicles it:—"March 27, 1682: At Criminal Court, the woman called Fyffe, who had struck Mr Alexander, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, was *condemned to be hanged* on the 7th of April next, for railing at the King, and calling him a villain, a knave, an apostate, and perjured man, who *deserved to be murdered.* This was a wild delusion of *Cameron's sowing.* But the Privy Council, looking upon her as mad, *reprieved* her."—(*Fountainhall's Decisions.*)

Did reprieve in that case mean any thing else than a full pardon? Moreover, have we not here another instance of a female State convict, *falsely* recorded by Wodrow and other fanatical chroniclers as having been *martyred*, who in point of

fact was *pardoned?* Will the minister of Glasserton undertake another historical vindication to prove that Christian Fyffe was *hanged nevertheless?*

The trouble may well be declined of seriously controverting "History Vindicated" in such wild propositions as these:—"There is *no proof* that a pardon *from the King* came to them; *no proof* that a pardon was *ever asked for them* by the Council,—for *it appears* that the Council's recommendations to mercy were *not always forwarded*"! (p. 26). Where ever does any such thing "appear"? This latter *fact* is as mythical as the martyrdom it supports. Our reverend Vindicator of History could not produce a single example of the Privy Council of Scotland (acting, too, under the advice of the King's Advocate) finally recording such a judgment of mercy as this, in a question of life or death, and thereafter carelessly forgetting, or wantonly neglecting, to forward that recommendation to the proper quarter. The case of the *Cumnock men*, to which alone the reverend Vindicator alludes, affords (as already shown in our "Case for the Crown") not the slightest authority for an assertion which bears the utmost improbability on the face of it. Then the idea that *the King* had *refused* his assent to the pardon of *two women* so politically insignificant that they must have been perfect *nonentities* to the Sovereign—recommended to his clemency by his own trusted Advocate and the whole Government of Scotland—is too absurd to be worthy of serious consideration. There is no record, argues Vindicator, of the King having consented—no evidence that he had acceded to the merciful recommendation, the "material pardon" granted by his Privy Council in Scotland! There was *no special record* kept in Scotland of such matter-of-course assenting by the Crown, although incidental notices of the kind happen to occur in the Register of the Council. But had the King *dissented*, would there have been *no notice of that fact* in the Register? Would the "material pardon" have remained in that Register *unevacuated?* Just imagine King James having *refused* to pardon these women! Would the Privy Council not have recorded a single word of remonstrance in support of their own humanity? Did not *King William's* Scotch Council remonstrate, although in vain, when he *refused* to allow the merciful dealing they had accorded to his poor

tortured victim *Nevil Payne?*[1] Does a single instance of the kind stain the character of either of the two last of the Stuarts? But were it conceivable that King James had really interposed a cruel and senseless *veto* against the pardon unanimously granted by his Privy Council to these poor women, would not all Kirkdom have been ringing with it then, and would not all Kirkdom be ringing with it still? *Would Lord Macaulay have missed it?* And who says so now? The minister of Glasserton! Is all knowledge of History, is common sense itself to be banished from this contention, that a Solway minister may not lose an impossible martyrdom?

Well, then, these women had been *pardoned* in terms of their own petitions to be allowed to take the oath of abjuration, and live. What follows? Why, that the incident of the captain of the guard offering that oath to Margaret Wilson expiring in the tide of the Solway, is just another senseless falsehood detected in the Penninghame fabrication. And can the eye of reason dwell upon that romance for a moment without seeing that it is a fabrication from beginning to end? The scene in the Solway beggars romance. The elder martyr, as if nothing better than an old bogle to frighten obstinate children, was first put into the water, and drowned outright, without further ceremony! The young one, held in leash, and petted the while, was desired to contemplate the flounderings of her venerable companion, and say what she thought of it. Nothing daunted, nay, charmed with the prospect, the maiden of eighteen expressed her firm determination to go in and win her crown rather than take an oath that she was not *art and part* with murderers and assassins! But we must refrain from marring the beautiful old story with our own incorrigible style. Pray, gentle readers, take and study it for yourselves, and catch, if you can, a spark of the enthusiasm with which that strange romance of the Penninghame Kirk-session appears to have inspired the Principal of St Andrews, who so fondly and reverentially dwells upon "The scene in the waters of the Bladnoch—the *primary death* of the older woman—the *steadfast and heroic sacrifice* of the younger"!

[1] See "Memorials of Dundee," vol. ii., pp. 122-3.

How, in the matter of the Wigtown Martyrs, the calumnies of the Covenant have been sustained, and the authentic records of the Government obscured, for a century and a half, by suppressio veri, *and* allegatio falsi.

Lord Macaulay's *suppressio veri*, while engrafting upon his *ad captandum* History of England a somewhat tawdry reproduction of Wodrow's publication of the Penninghame romance,[1] was most mischievous. Thousands of his admiring readers who had never cast eyes, and never will, on a page of Wodrow, could not possibly learn, from the seductive English historian, who might be expected to quote him fully and fairly, that anything in the shape either of reprieve or pardon was bestowed, by the Government of the last of the Stuarts, upon the two martyrs whose apotheosis he set himself to signalise, that he might malign King James. But even his sole authority Wodrow, although the first to publish, in 1722, his own accidental discovery of the reprieve, did not disclose all he had discovered. He, too, entirely suppressed a circumstance, there recorded, which is so very material to the truth or falsehood of that martyrdom, that the martyrologists, whom we have brought to face it, can find no better answer than this,—"a *clerical error*, the mark of a hastily *concocted* and incomplete document"! That is to say, the Principal of St Andrews *assumes* a clerical error, in a carefully written State Register, and involving a question of life and death, in order that he may *further assume* the said public record to be "a hastily concocted and incomplete document"!

Neither has our Very Reverend opponent dealt as fairly as he might have done, with the share which the author of "Memorials of Dundee" is well entitled to claim in the discovery and disclosure of this important evidence. The Principal shall speak for himself:—

"Let us look, for a moment, at the evidence on which we are asked to discredit, as pure fiction, the old story of the Wigtown Martyrdom. And, first of all, let it be noticed that there has been no 'discovery,' notwithstanding the *noise made by Mr Napier* and some of his critics.

[1] See "Case for the Crown," pp. 3 to 15.

The document which has been published by Mr Napier was *perfectly well known* to Wodrow; he expressly refers to it as having been found by himself in the Council Register. 'It is of [*more*] importance to observe,' he says, 'that in the Council Registers, since I wrote what is above, I find what follows:—"April last, Margaret Wilson and Margaret M'Lauchlison under sentence of death, pronounced by the Justices, are condemned [*continued*] till ; and the Lords of his Majesty's Privy Council recommend it to the Secretaries to procure their remission."' 'The day to which they are reprieved,' he adds, 'is blank in the records; but, I may safely suppose, it would be for a longer day than the 11th of May, there being scarcely time betwixt the 30th of April and that, to get a return from the Secretaries. Indeed, at this time, a recommendation from the Council, for a remission, was looked on as a material pardon. If matters stand thus the people at Wigtown are deeply guilty, and had no powers for what they did.'

"Such is the *frank* acknowledgment by Wodrow *in the face of* the very document emblazoned and *fac-similed* by Mr Napier."[1]

We "emblazoned" nothing but the truth, Very Reverend Sir. If there be false heraldry in this contention, it is not ours. But we can appreciate the annoyance which our revelations in "Memorials of Dundee" have occasioned in certain quarters. It may be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,—nevertheless, tell it not in Gath, make *no noise about it* in the streets of Askelon.

It is quite true, that "the document which has been published by Mr Napier was perfectly well known to Wodrow." But it is no less true, in point of fact, that Wodrow *did not disclose* the most telling fact, against his own history of that pseudo-martyrdom, which he found in the latent document *he knew so well.* He took it upon him to omit entirely the following paragraph in the recorded pardon:—"*And discharges the Magistrates of* Edinburgh *for putting of the said sentence to execution against them.*" That is the paragraph which Wodrow suppressed; and that is the paragraph of which we presumed to give a *fac-simile*, both in "Memorials of Dundee," and the "Case for the Crown."[2]

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[1] In his quotation from Wodrow Dr Tulloch had omitted one word, and mistaken another, accidental errors, which we have taken the liberty to correct as above.

[2] See the *fac-simile* in the "Case for the Crown," p. 18; and in "Memorials of Dundee," vol. iii. p. 691, *Appendix.*

The conclusive fact, of itself a complete extinguisher to the "Wigtown Martyrs," that these two women, said to have been executed at Wigtown on the 11th of May 1685, *were in the Tolbooth of Edinburgh* on the last day of April immediately preceding, of which date their *pardon*, by the Government of Scotland, was ordered to be transmitted to London for the sanction of the Sovereign, had fallen into *total oblivion* along with the record which contained it. In oblivion it remained for no less a period than a hundred and forty years, even after the first *mutilated* publication, of the official record of that Government pardon, by Wodrow in 1722. By reason of Wodrow not having published the fact, contained therein, of the women being removed to Edinburgh, that which renders the Penninghame fable *physically* as well as morally impossible, continued to be *unknown*, until the publication of "Memorials of Dundee" in 1862. It was unknown to Hume, Laing, Scott, and Macaulay. Not that the present author was the first after Wodrow to *discover* it, but he was the first to *disclose* it.

In 1851 appeared a compilation, in a biographical form at once fanatical and fanciful, and consequently the very reverse of substantial history or reliable biography, entitled, "The Ladies of the Covenant—Memorials of distinguished Scottish female characters, embracing the period of the Covenant and the Persecutions: By the Rev. James Anderson." This author had made some researches, suggested by Wodrow's History, among the Privy Council Registers, and remnants of loose warrants, preserved in the General Register House, and he there stumbled upon the petition of old Margaret Lauchlison, being the original authenticated by a notary public. There does not appear to have been any prior publication or discovery of this most important document, with which the reverend gentleman enriched his volume, but without allowing it to have the slightest effect upon his martyrological argument. To this he added, for the *first time*, a full, and to all appearance a faithful transcript of the consequent reprieve, finally recorded by the Privy Council, of date last day of April 1685, being in fact a remission of the sentence of death which had been passed upon both these women at the Cir-

cuit Court of Justiciary in Wigtown on the 13th of that same month.

Led, but fortunately not misled, by the "Ladies of the Covenant," the author of "Memorials of Dundee" made his own transcripts of these two documents, and thus happened to discover that neither had been accurately brought before the public.

1st, The docquet of a notary public, authenticating the old woman's petition, and setting forth that the notary had attested it upon the requisition of the petitioner, who declared she could not write, had been altogether omitted. Probably this had occurred in consequence of the notary's docquet being in latin.

2d. But with the record of the relative reprieve a more serious liberty had been taken. In his mistaken zeal for these martyrs, the reverend champion of their crowns, in the publication in question, had substituted the word "Wigton" for the word "Edinburgh," although the latter very plainly appears on the face of that recorded pardon, as a glance at the *fac-simile*, thus rendered necessary, but which seems to have annoyed Dr Tulloch, will suffice to satisfy the reader. This emendation of the Privy Council Register, *essential*, certainly, to the *apotheosis* of these "Ladies of the Covenant," was effected without any of that "noise" for which we have been somewhat rashly rebuked from the chair of St Andrews. No comment or note of explanation was added, to account for so serious a deviation from the actual text of this valuable and latent State record. Thus a most material circumstance, hitherto obscured by what, at least in *point of fact*, was *suppressio veri*, came now to be hidden under the more complete obscuration of what in like manner assumed the aspect of *allegatio falsi*.

The substitution of one word for another might have been a mere clerical mistake, accidentally occasioned by the state of the transcriber's belief. But the discrepancy, after escaping observation for eleven years, having been discovered and disclosed in 1862, a correspondent of the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* pointedly called for an explanation. Thus invoked, the reverend author responded by frankly admitting the fact, and entering a special defence, which we must give in his own words:

"I readily admit," he says, "that it would have been better had I retained the word Edinburgh in the text, and explained in a foot-note that I believed it to be a mistake for Wigtown; and had I anticipated that an argument would have been founded on the word *Edinburgh*, in an *attempt* to prove that *one of the best established facts in history* is a fiction, I would certainly have done so."[1]

We have no disposition to doubt this defence, as against any idea of deliberate fraud. It would be both unjust and ungenerous not to give implicit credence, as we do, to the reverend gentleman's own explanation. We are much more disposed to commend the courageous frankness with which he brought to light the old woman's petition (accidentally discovered in the midst of a confused and desultory collection of remnants of Privy Council papers), as connected with, and accounting for, the subsequent reprieve of *both martyrs*, all most damaging to his own martyrological biographies. For this discovery, so far as we know, the truth of history is entirely indebted to Mr Anderson, and to an extent to which the reverend gentleman himself is purblind.

Of one thing, however, we remain satisfied—and it is our chief reason for directing attention to the unwarrantable emendation in question—namely, that when this over-zealous Covenanter substituted the word "Wigton" for "Edinburgh," it was under the all-prevailing mental impression that the *theory* (for it is only a theory for the nonce) of a clerical error in the State Record is *absolutely essential to the story of the Wigtown Martyrs.* In the reverend martyrologist's estimation, it was *un fait accompli* that these women were executed *at Wigtown* on the 11th of May 1685. With him that was not a question of fact, but a matter of faith. Any kind or amount

[1] See *Edinburgh Evening Courant* of Friday, 31st October 1862. The curious reader will there find the reverend author's argumentative reasons (overlaying at great length the defence in question), for *practically assuming* a clerical error to suit his foregone conclusions. He cannot have considered them of *much* value to the public, as he only first published them in reply to the challenge of his noiseless emendation, which was eleven years later. It does not appear that the reverend gentleman has other care or congregation than the "Ladies of the Covenant;" and whether their apostle be yet on earth, we do not happen to know.

of proof whatever, against that which in his own mind he had settled to be "one of the best established facts in history," he appears to have been incapable of treating as proof at all. And hence the fact in question, not being otherwise controvertible, was to be regarded as a clerical error in the record, and so clearly such *ex facie* as to be corrected *brevi manu*, in the act of transcription, with no more hesitation or explanation than if it had been a simple word grotesquely spelt. In short, we cannot help regarding the state of mind which had led Mr Anderson to commit the folly of thus tampering with historical proofs, as being typical of that fond and fanatical faith in Wodrow, which leads even Covenanting or political authors of a higher stamp, and quite above taking such liberties with an original and probative record, to close doggedly the eye and ear of reason and common sense against all human testimony that tends to dethrone their idol, or to disprove the extravagant and *ex parte* calumnies of the Covenant against Episcopacy, of which Wodrow is the Clarendon.

But we must now again take up the song of the Solway against this unwelcome "material pardon."

"That the date to which the reprieve was extended was left *blank*, is *a remarkable circumstance.* It was *evidently* so framed to suit contingencies,—to allow time for a royal pardon to be got should the abjuration be taken; and, *perhaps, to allow the sentence of the Commissioners at once to take effect should the oath be refused.* For, *it may be* that the Government was *informed* that these criminals were not *quite* so ready to take the oath as the petitions in their favour *made them believe.*"—(*Hist. Vind.* p. 83.)

Oh! History, History, how art thou vindicated! Here is a matter as plain as Criffel in a cloudless sky, so enveloped in Solway mists and Covenanting conundrums as to be rendered invisible and unintelligible. The appointed day of execution was "extended" to a day left blank, "*evidently* to suit *contingencies.*" Then, "*perhaps*" it was to allow the original sentence to take effect "*at once*"! Or, "*it may be*" that the Government "*was informed*" that the women, who had petitioned that same Government to be *allowed* to abjure, were nevertheless still *refusing* to abjure, even after the Government pardon had been *finally recorded* in their favour, the very

terms of which pardon prove that *they had abjured!* Reverend Sir,—if you will forgive my style,—you can no more get your Wigtown Martyrs into the water again, by means of such a psalm of *perhapses* as this, than if you sang,—

> "*Peutêtre qu'oui—peutêtre que non—*
> *Peutêtre vous etes un papillon,*"—

set to the Old Hundreth.

Imagine a *pardon* so framed as that the death-warrant, which it simply *discharged*, might "take effect at once"! How on earth could the Government's *absolute discharge*, of a standing order to execute these women on a particular day, have been intended, or expected, to operate, alternately, as an *evacuation* of that same *discharge*, simply by naming *no day at all* for the execution? And was the Government of Scotland so little preoccupied in 1685, a few weeks prior to Argyle and Monmouth's alarming invasions, that, on the last day of April in that year, the whole Privy Council, including all the great statesmen of the Kingdom, were taxing their diplomatic ingenuity, and imagining cunning devices, how to *dodge* two foolish westland fanatics of the female sex into the Abjuration Oath, by flaunting a hypothetical pardon before their eyes, which meant murder and martyrdom after all?

Dr Tulloch's idea is *totally different.* Instead of reading the reprieve as a cunning device to "suit contingencies," he goes all upon *hasty concoction* and *clerical error!* He treats *sub silentio* that gratuitous *emendation* of the Register which had been brought to light, and rectified, in "Memorials of Dundee." But, whether as an original or borrowed idea matters not, the very reverend Principal avails himself of the theory which formed Mr Anderson's defence. He pronounces the word "Edinburgh," in the State Register, to be,—"a clerical error, the mark of a *hastily concocted* and *incomplete* document."—"It is an *obviously* incomplete document—the dates are *not filled in.*" This, again, is mere blundering. The phrase "concocted," applied to this humane and perfectly unequivocal deliverance of the Privy Council, may be dismissed as verbiage; and as for the haste alleged, the beautifully kept register in question suggests the very reverse, to any one who has ever taken the trouble to inspect it. Dr Tulloch has here fallen into

the mistake of supposing that such blanks indicate hurry and incompleteness. But no one who has been in the habit of inspecting records and deeds can fail to know, that blanks, for day and month, are continually met with in the most important documents, which, nevertheless, are to all intents and purposes complete. An example may be given under the same date as that of the pardon of the Wigtown women, being one of the *acta* at that very sederunt. Colonel Douglas, during his circuit in the west, had taken bond from two disorderly westland whigs, to appear at head-quarters by a certain day, and answer for themselves before the Privy Council. They had petitioned, it seems, for a prorogation of the time for their compearance, and doubtless had also expressed penitence. The following is the deliverance on their petition:—

[*Sederunt last day of April* 1685]. "The Lords of his Majestie's Privy Council, having considered ane address made by Hugh Montgomerie and John Mitchell, desyring that the libertie formerly granted to them for appearance might be continued for some tyme,—Doe hereby prorogat, and continue, the former libertie granted to them, until the [*blank*] day of [*blank*], upon their finding of caution to compear *before the Lords of Privy Council* when called for, and in the mean tyme to live regularly and orderly, under the penalty contained in their *former band granted to Colonel James Douglas*, and this shall be to them a sufficient warrant."

Now, here we have the very same kind of *blanks* as those which occur in the pardon of the Wigtown women. But, manifestly this was not the omission of dates from haste, nor do the blanks indicate any *incompleteness* in the record of that deliverance. These two delinquents had no new date fixed for their compearance, because they were so far favoured as to be simply taken bound under certain penalties to live orderly, and compear *when called for.*

The recorded deliverance in the case of the Wigtown women is just another example of the kind in a more serious case. They were reprieved by the Privy Council *expressly* in the sense of being *pardoned* by the Privy Council. It was not, as the context *proves*, a mere postponement of the day of their execution for a special or temporary purpose. To have fixed another day for their death would, under the circumstances, have been of no use. For such was the nature of this, politi-

cally speaking, very simple and utterly inconsequential case, that, the Privy Council, including the Public Prosecutor, having come to that merciful conclusion, (manifestly contemplated from the first, if these women would but cry *peccavi* and *abjure* in terms of law), the fact of the pardon being confirmed by the Crown was beyond all rational doubt. It was a foregone conclusion, and hence the deliverance naturally took the form of a reprieve *sine die*. These, then, were blanks never intended to be "filled in." Indeed they never could. For, if King James can possibly be imagined so insane, not to say savage (totally at variance with his known disposition), as to have refused his consent to the Government pardon of these two females, a *new order*, appointing another date for their execution, and under special instructions from his Majesty, would *most unquestionably* have in like manner been minuted at some other sederunt of the Privy Council, and recorded in the Register thereafter in due form, thereby *evacuating* the previous merciful order. And then, indeed, would have appeared, on the face of that Register, such an indelible stain of royal tyranny, and objectless cruelty, as could never have been effaced from the History of the Stuarts.

So much for the dates *blank* in this recorded pardon, which had to be sent to London for the formal sanction of the Sovereign. Where, meanwhile, were these two female convicts? They had been tried at Wigtown on the 13th of April. We have that fact (*correcting* Wodrow, whose ignorant romance has it that they were tried and condemned in *May*), stated in the old woman's petition. They were pardoned by the Privy Council on the *last day of April*. We have that fact from the Register. The day appointed for their execution, and which appointment was expressly *discharged* by the Privy Council on the above date, must, consequently, have been some day *beyond* the last day of April,—very probably it was the 11*th of May* (about a month after the date of their sentence), the day on which they *are said* to have been drowned by the *cruel* Government that pardoned them! Is it likely, is it not rather most improbable, that, after having petitioned the Privy Council to be allowed to abjure, these two female convicts would still be left in the Tolbooth of Wigtown, under the executive juris-

diction of the magistrates of that burgh, at a crisis when all kinds of rebellious delinquents were constantly being sent from the disturbed districts to be dealt with at head-quarters? One of the minister of Glasserton's ingenious *conjectures* is, as we have seen, that, "it may be," the Government had been "*informed*" that these petitioners were not "quite so ready to take the oath as the petitions in their favour made them (the Government) believe"! There is not the shadow of reason for all this conjecturing. But would not that have just been another strong inducement for bringing the petitioners to head-quarters, as was done with *scores* of rebellious delinquents at that very time? For the very last desire of the Government was to put these foolish women to death. As happened in the case of *Christian Fyfe*, they would rather have come to the conclusion, after all, that they were *mad*. Besides, the chief magistrate of Wigtown, *Provost Coltran*, was himself at head-quarters, attending Parliament as commissioner for the burgh, at that same time. What more natural than that they should be brought from the scene of their contumacy, the rankest atmosphere of westland whiggery, to be dealt with, at the doors of the mercifully inclined Privy Council, by the Provost of Wigtown himself, who was likely to know all about these poor deluded creatures? This is the *a priori* reasoning on the question. Well. Is there anything in the *Records* to *confirm* this reasoning? Why, the record, of the Government *pardon* of these women, still standing on the Register of the Privy Council of Scotland, *actually tells us*, that, at the date of their pardon, they were under *the executive responsibility of the Magistrates of Edinburgh!* What more would you have?

Now, look at the argument of the Principal of St Andrews against these views:—

"What could have been the use of *dragging* the two poor women to Edinburgh, especially as, according to the theory which supposes them transported there, they had both *already abjured their crimes*, and applied for pardon."—(*Story of the Wigtown Martyrs, by Dr Tulloch.*)

The very phraseology here indicates weakness in the reasoning, and the argument itself is a confusion of ideas. As for the "*use* of the *dragging*," it may suffice to say, that the women were "dragged" to Edinburgh, *because* they were not to be

drowned at Wigtown. Are they to be pitied on that account? Then, the women were not called upon to "abjure *their crimes.*" That, too, savours of verbiage. They were called upon, like all the rest of the lieges, *to take the abjuration oath;* against which all the conventicle preachers railed and ranted, because that law compromised *their own personal safety.* Dr Tulloch, moreover, confounds the idea of the penitent women *petitioning* to be *allowed* to take it, as the condition precedent of their pardon, with the formal and authoritative act of taking it, to fulfil which they were brought, *like every other such delinquent,* to the head-quarters of the Privy Council.

If, indeed, there were produced anything like *evidence* that these women were still in the Tolbooth of Wigtown at the date of their pardon in Edinburgh, a clerical error in the State Register might be a legitimate solution of the difficulty. But while there is not a vestige of such evidence, and the State Register itself gives us *the fact,* and that consistent with all the *probabilities,* that the women had been transferred to Edinburgh, will common intelligence submit to a fanatical assumption *for the nonce,* that *Edinburgh* is a clerical error for *Wigtown,* committed by the highly responsible Clerk of Council, in so important a deliverance, consisting of no more than six lines and a half, and left standing there to this day?

At this time Sir William Paterson, and Mr Colin Mackenzie, the Lord Advocate's brother, were joint-clerks of the Privy Council, and in constant attendance at their sederunts. They were men of high position, and their office was one of great responsibility. The minutes were adjusted at the Board, and signed by the President, "*I.P.D.*" These were kept, in loose sheets, as the warrants of what was entered in the Register. The Register itself was the most important and *confidential* Record of the Kingdom; containing, in fact, all the State secrets of the Government. At the sederunt of the pardon of these Wigtown women, both the Lord Clerk Register (who was chiefly responsible for the Records), and the Lord Advocate were present, with that very wide-awake personage Queensberry presiding; and the Register of their *Acta* was constantly under the care and inspection of confidential officials of the Government, from the highest to the more subordinate. The remark-

able clerical error assumed could not have escaped detection for a day.

Doubtless many remnants of the Privy Council papers are still lurking in holes and corners about the country, and in private hands. Sometime after our own crusade against these martyrological calumnies had commenced, a miscellaneous mass of such loose documents was purchased at small expense, for the Register House, from the representatives of the minister of Monzievaird, who was a "collector." Among these we find a long list of prisoners from Dumfries, including many women, ordered "*to be sent to Edinburgh*," as we shall have occasion to notice afterwards. There are also among these papers lists of the whole inhabitants above pupillarity, in various parishes, certified and transmitted to head-quarters by the clergyman, as ordered by the Privy Council. A note is attached to the names of such as were conspicuously rebellious, or contumacious against the orders of Government. This implied no tyranny, and was never exercised in a persecuting spirit. It was a wise and necessary regulation, dictated by the exigencies of times when the Throne was tottering, and, as the Lord Advocate declared, when "no man who served the King could know whether or not his murderer was at his elbow." Among the names of the inhabitants of the parish of Kirkinner, certified at Wigtown, October 15, 1684, by "Andrew Sympson, minister of Kirkinner," we pause, with profound interest, at the name of a female greatly glorified in the history of "religion," and the calendar of saints and martyrs, viz. "Margaret Lauchlison: *Disorderly*"! In a list of 630 names this far-famed "Lady of the Covenant" is one of eight (six of whom are women) distinguished by that sanctifying characteristic. Of the two men so sanctified one is named *Archibald Heron*,—a game bird, probably, of that venerable nest which has been immortalised by Sir Andrew Agnew. In this same collection, moreover, we discover the names of both of the Wigtown martyrs in another document of more importance, and which requires closer attention.

That now referred to consists of several folio sheets, of notes of the past business in Council, epitomised by one of the clerks, and embracing a period from the beginning of April

1685 to the end of July of that same year. The sheets, which have been originally attached to each other, but unbound, comprehend twenty-six pages, all paged consecutively, the first page being headed as follows:—"*Note of the acts passed in Council, and their Committees, beginning in April* 1685." The epitomised extracts, which are all in the same hand, and seemingly written at or about the same time, being certainly a subsequent operation of clerkship for some purpose which it were useless to conjecture, follows the order of the Privy Council Register, and the minutes of their secret committees. The first extract is of date 2d April 1685, and the last 21st July 1685, comprehending a note of the *acta* of the Government during four months. Of date the "last day of April 1685," we find, *inter alia*, the Government pardon of the two Wigtown women extracted and epitomised in this simple, undemonstrative manner:—"*Margerat Wilson and Margerat Lachlisone reprived, and recommended for a remission.*" Now, there can be no question that this was written *sometime after* the date of this merciful, and, so far as the Privy Council was concerned, *final* issue of the case of these female convicts. Unquestionably, the confidential clerk of Government who wrote this must again have had under his eye that original record of the pardon in which these words occur,—"And discharges the *Magistrates of Edinburgh* for putting of the said sentence to execution against them." Now, had *Edinburgh* been a clerical error for *Wigtown*, would that blunder *in essentialibus* have still escaped detection, still remained uncorrected, still have been left standing in the paramount record of the Government? And that it was so left cannot be doubted, as there it stands to this day.

And will rational men believe, that while this Government clerk was going on, calmly and methodically, with this jog-trot work of extracting and epitomising the proceedings of the Government of Scotland at this period, between the beginning of April and the end of July 1685, and noting in its order, without a sensational idea in his head, the simple fact that these two women were *pardoned* by the Privy Council on the last day of April, that, upon the 11th of May thereafter,—an *intermediate* date in the work of this unconscious clerk,—a

scene was going on at Wigtown of the public execution of these same women, how brought about no record says, and no man alive can tell, but *as if* under the orders of Government, and *guarded by the troops of the Government*, constituting the most exciting and marvellous of saintly martyrdoms,—"the hail sands covered wi' cluds o' folk a' gathered into clusters here and there, offering up prayers for the two women while they were being put down." Look on this picture by Sir Andrew Agnew, and on that by the Clerk of Council!

And who can doubt, as the eye rests upon this separate and subsequent note of their pardon, that, ere it had passed, *everything* requisite to entitle them to the clemency of the Sovereign had been fulfilled by these female convicts? The Privy Council Records are teeming with proof that no State delinquents, male or female, who had refused to take the abjuration oath, were ever *assoilzied* or *discharged* until they had renounced their obstinacy, taken the oath, and enacted themselves for obedience to the laws in future. And, most assuredly, the two Wigtown women, condemned for that treasonable contempt before the High Court at Wigtown on the 13th of April, could not possibly have been "reprieved, and *recommended for a remission*," on the 30th of that same month, unless they had done so. What follows? Why, that that melodramatic scene, in the month of May thereafter, of the captain of the guard attempting to administer the oath of abjuration, in a choking draught of the flowing Solway, to force that elaborate test down the throat of a drowning woman,—a scene politically gloated over by the genius of Macaulay, and fanatically sermonised, and insisted upon as a matter of Christian faith, by covenanting geniuses of less lofty pretensions, until common sense sickens at the fantastical calumny,—is what boys call *bosh*, and Americans *bunkum*.

But that these "Wigtown Martyrs" were removed to Edinburgh, and had submitted to the abjuration oath prior to their reprieve on the 30th of April, are facts so important to the utter extinction of the Penninghame fabrication, that our readers must submit to the tediousness of a few more illustrations afforded by the Council Records in the Register House.

At this crisis of the rebellion, State delinquents, from all quarters, were summoned to Edinburgh, to be dealt with under the immediate authority of the Government.

Among the remains of the Privy Council warrants of the period, preserved in the Register House, are various lists of many prisoners, ordered from the scene of their rebellious delinquency, however distant, to answer for themselves at head-quarters. These lists are mere remnants of the papers of the Privy Council, and their secret committees, very accidentally preserved; some, indeed, only recently recovered out of private hands. No list of the precise date when these women must have been forwarded to Edinburgh—namely, between the 13th and 30th of April 1685,—the respective dates of the condemnation and the pardon—appears to have been preserved. But we find some lists dated in the following month of May, which are quite sufficient to illustrate the system, and to clear the points at issue. What these points are must be kept in view:—

1*st*, Is there any room for doubt that these Wigtown women had been removed from the Tolbooth of Wigtown, after petitioning the Privy Council, in order to be disposed of at the seat of Government?

2*d*, Is there any room for doubt, that they had "*cleanzed*" themselves (to use a phrase of the period), by taking the oath of abjuration *prior* to that final record of their pardon, by the Privy Council, as entered in their Register?

The various lists yet extant shew, that on the very eve of the alarming *escapades* of Argyle and Monmouth, the weakness of which was not to be predicated, the prisons of *Burntisland*, *Leith*, *Canongate*, and *Edinburgh*, became crowded with poor ignorant victims, of "those rebellious villains they call ministers," (as Claverhouse most justly designed them), conventicle preachers such as Renwick and Shields, who at this crisis were agitating desperately in support of their expected Messiah, teaching the people of the most fanatical districts to defy the law, to disown the Monarchy, to execrate, and threaten the life of, the Sovereign himself, and to refuse, obstinately and publicly, the oaths of

allegiance, and abjuration, while the King of the Kirk was momentarily looked for on the shores of the west. These deluded followers, male and female, (many of them as miserable as they were ignorant), as a matter of State necessity were taken into custody whenever they became obstinate in their turbulent disloyalty, and were all forthwith forwarded to the prisons at or near the seat of Government,—from England and Ireland; from Cumberland, Annandale, Nithsdale, Dumfries, Galloway, Ayrshire, Lanarkshire, and Glasgow. It would, indeed, have been a perfect marvel, if the two Wigtown women *alone*, and after having petitioned the Privy Council for their lives, had been left behind in the Tolbooth of Wigtown, within the randon of the Argyle invasion, while the chief magistrate of Wigtown was at head-quarters at the time, and no competent authority in Wigtown to deal with their case.

There is a list (formerly referred to), of upwards of eighty prisoners, men and women, "brought from *Dumfries to Edinburgh*," in 1684,—a voluminous instance of "dragging" to head-quarters. Various other lists in the following year are thus entitled:—

"*Brunt Island*, the 20th day of May 1685: In presence of John Wedderburne, the several prisoners efter mentioned, being called and examined conforme to ane order of the private committee; there caises is as follows:—

"James Biggam, servitor to Sir Francis Scot, prisoner for not giving intelligence; *will take the test.*

"Robert Donall, for allowing harbour, whereanent he depones *negative;* and *will take the test.*

"Mr John Fraser, *obstinat.*
William Oliphant, *obstinat.*
Charles Gray, *idem.*
John Forman, *idem.*
John Martin, *idem.*
} *Prisoners from England.*"

The names of thirteen others follow, all noted as refusing the oath of allegiance. In the same sheets are long lists of the prisoners in the Tolbooths of *Edinburgh, Canongate,* and *Leith,* with remarks on their cases by the examiner and reporter. Of these we can only afford to give a few specimens, and only in illustration of the fact at issue, that rebellious delinquents were at this time forwarded from *all quarters,* to be dealt with by the Privy Council.

"William Wilson, *from Galloway*, will not own His Majesty's authority, and says he knows no king they have now."

"John Sintoune says he knows not whether the King be King or not."

"Mr Alexander Doneing confesses converse with the Bishop's murderers; will take the oath of allegiance, but not the prerogative."

"John Stot, *from Dumfries*, refuses the oath of alleadgience."

"John Black, a *Galloway* man, refuses all oaths."

"*Prisoners from Dumfries.*"

"Barbara Cowan,
Agnes Corehead,
Jean Grier,
Grissell Gamrie,
Margaret M'Lelan,
Mary Gibson,
Nicolas M'Neight,
} *Will not abjure or swear.*"

Four women, who, after examination in Edinburgh Tolbooth, had been remanded to Burntisland, seemingly because they had refused to *abjure*, are thus reported upon from the latter prison:—

"*Women brought back.*"

"Anna Murray, *abjures.*
Isobel Ladlay, *abjures.*
Margaret Nicoll, *abjures.*
Isobell M'Faigeane, *abjures.*"

Then follow long lists of prisoners from *all quarters of Dumfriesshire*, including many women. The whole lists are thus summed up by the reporter, John Wedderburne, who signs them:—"Men and women 184; of women 50,—(being) 42 out of the several prisons, (and) of women prisoners *new come* from Dumfries 8." All this, again, is reported by Lord Gosfoord (on the secret committee of the Privy Council), being entitled on the outer sheet of the whole reports,—"Report by Gosfoord from Brunt Island, anent the prisoners, 20th May 1685."

Among these lists there is one of 87 "*prisoners from Glasgow*," where they had been received, on their way from Ayrshire and other quarters, to Edinburgh, and incarcerated at first in Burntisland. The three last in this list are thus named:—

"James Naper, *will take the test.*
John Person,
Allan Aitken,
} *Tested.*"

The case of these three men must be particularly noted. It suffices of itself to settle the question whether the Wigtown women had been forwarded to Edinburgh, as the Privy Council Register bears in point of fact. Indeed, in so far as regards their *sentence*, its *postponement*, and eventual *remission*, the cases are identical. These men had been forwarded from Cumnock, (where they were tried and condemned) to Glasgow, and so on to Edinburgh, and were lodged in the Tolbooth thereof shortly before the 8th of May 1685.

Case in point of the Male Convicts from Cumnock.

The royal Commission of Justiciary, which was presided over by Colonel James Douglas, Queensberry's brother, had held their Court at Cumnock, in the neighbouring shire of Ayr, immediately before sitting at Wigtown. At Cumnock the three men in question were condemned to death, namely, Allen Aitken, designed indweller in Cumnock; John Pearson, a tailor there; and James Napper, a mason in Ochiltree. This was a very serious case, eventually giving rise to much deliberation, and various entries in the Register of the Privy Council. On some day between the 27th of March 1685 (the commencement of that High Commission), and the 9th of April thereafter (when the case is first brought before the Privy Council), these three men were tried together at Cumnock, and condemned to die on the 20th of April. So the day appointed for their execution must have been a considerable time after their condemnation, just as afterwards occurred in the case of the Wigtown women. And this shows, that these dreadful Commissioners,—"Douglas, Lagg, and Grahame,"—perfect Ogres, according to conventicle ravings, and *Old Mortality's tomb-stones*,—possessed, and exercised, a wise and humane discretion, in postponing the execution, in *both cases*, to so distant a day as would allow ample time for submission to the Government. Be it observed, also, that these five convicts, the three Cumnock men, and the two Wigtown women, were the only delinquents condemned to death throughout the whole Justiciary Circuit over which Colonel Douglas then presided,—and they were *all pardoned*. Well,—did these same Justiciary

Commissioners,—who, while holding their Courts in the most dangerous districts, exercised their powers of life and death with the utmost forbearance,—did they actually *murder* the very women they were humanely *disinclined* to execute in terms of law; and this, too, in the face of a Government pardon which these very Judges *had enabled* them to obtain? For let the reader bear it always in mind, that, when the Principal of St Andrews, in language at once violent and vague, is fain to shift the *onus* of this pseudo-martyrdom from the *Government* to some unintelligible idea of *lynch law*, committed by some nameless "high-handed officials,"—but which he still pronounces to be consistent with the "brutalities" of Government,—it is the merciful Royal Commissioners themselves he accuses; for to them fanatical historians, and tombstone forgeries, all expressly refer the martyrdom in question.

On the 9th April 1685, at a very full sederunt of the Privy Council, it was reported by the Prime Minister that, at the Commission of Justiciary recently held in Cumnock, three men had been condemned to die, who now petitioned the Government for a remission. According to the Register, the names in the petition were as follows:—"Allen Aitken, indweller in Cumnock; John Pearson, taillior there; and James *Meason*, taillior in Ochiltree." Their petition bore, that they had been "sentenced to die for concealing, and not revealing, of these rebels who lately went through some western shires," and that now "they acknowledge their great ignorance, error, and fault, and cast themselves upon the King's mercy, and are content *to take any oaths* or obligations, by law appointed, as evidence of their abhorrence of their former practices, and a testimony of their future good behaviour, and desiring his Grace will grant them a reprieve for some time, that application might be made to his Sacred Majesty for a remission to them: Which address being *read in Council*, the Lord Commissioner his Grace hath reprieved, and hereby reprieveth, the execution of the foresaid sentence of death until the 20th day of May next, at which time the same to be put in execution in case there be no further order to the contrary." [1]

[1] See the entry in the Register quoted *verbatim* in "Case for the

There is no mistaking the meaning of this. These convicts were still in Cumnock, where they had been tried. They had not taken *there* any of the Government oaths or tests, preparatory to the remission they prayed for. But they declare that now they "are content to take any oaths or obligations by law appointed." For it was well understood that such was an essential condition of a favourable issue to their application. The reprieve meanwhile granted was merely a temporary suspension of their sentence. But it was for no less a period than over six weeks. Manifestly there was *no desire to execute these men.* The Royal Commissioners had evinced that same merciful disposition, by postponing the day of their execution to a date which gave them ample time for crying *peccavi;* and the Privy Council prolonged the period for more than six weeks, that they might be brought to head-quarters to be examined, and *tested,* under the immediate orders of Government. Accordingly we do find, from the State Register, that these three men had been lodged in the Canongate Tolbooth, and had taken the *oath of abjuration,* prior to the 8th of May 1685. Before proceeding with their history, however, a circumstance must be cleared, from which, by means of a little confusion, the minister of Glasserton labours to extract an argument in support of his assumption of a *clerical error* in the record of the pardon of the Wigtown women.

In the "Case for the Crown," when producing this parallel instance from Cumnock of humane dealing on the part of the Privy Council, it was pointed out, that in the original petition, according to the Register, the name assigned to the last of the three petitioners was a misnomer. "James *Mason, tailor* in Ochiltree," was a mistake for "James *Napper, mason* in Ochiltree." That this was a mistake is proved by the Register itself; for, in the very next deliverance on their case,—which was after the men had been brought to Edinburgh,—the real name is given, and is accurately repeated in every subsequent mention of their names. It must be observed, moreover, that although the original mistake appears in the Register, it by no

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Crown," p. 38. The "further order," doubtless, was to bring them to head-quarters.

means follows that this was a blunder committed by the clerk of Council. At that time the men were still in the Tolbooth of Cumnock, and the misnomer is more likely to have been a confusion occurring in the original petition, which, probably, none of them were able to sign. The petition itself has not been discovered; but the misnomer, or how it arose, is really a matter of no importance whatever to the present question.

But to the Glasserton argument everything is of importance that can be twisted into a quirk for the martyrdom. Armed with this bolt out of our belt, and encouraged thereby to an unwonted accession of vivacity, our reverend opponent thus merrily improves the occasion :—

"The word 'Edinburgh' in the reprieve [of the women] may be regarded as a clerical error of the *not very accurate scribe*, who, in the same register, and about the same time, when dealing with a *similar case* of life and death, wrote 'James Meason, taillior, Ochiltree,' instead of 'James Napper, mason, Ochiltree,'—thus reprieving a *mythical personage*, not much in danger of being *hanged*, and leaving the *real man*, towards whom the Council had *merciful intentions*, still under the sentence of death."—(*Hist. Vind.*, p. 24.)

Have a care, reverend Sir, that this lapse into liveliness do not spoil your logic. It by no means follows that *because* a temporary personal misnomer, arising out of a little verbal confusion, is found in the register, and only known to be a misnomer by reason of its after correction in the same record, *therefore* any other entry therein, which may happen to disprove a fanatical fable, is to be got rid of upon the plea of a clerical error, by analogy, although there be nothing in the record to shew that it is an error, and everything in the circumstances of the case to prove that it is not an error.

And thanks, Vindicator of History, for the very important concession that the Privy Council "had *merciful intentions*" in what you admit to be a similar and simultaneous case with that of the Wigtown women. But are you not like the foolish game-cocks, forgetting which side of the main you are on? Your case (and Dr Tulloch's) is, that the Privy Council of Scotland, in 1685, *never* had any merciful intentions. But this admission of yours, that the dreadful tribunal, which, according to your general argument, dispensed neither justice

nor mercy, did nevertheless entertain "merciful intentions" towards these three convicts of the male sex,—contrasts strangely with your story of the "Wigtown Martyrs,"—two helpless women, of not the least consequence to the State, sacrificed, *coram publico*, in the most inhuman manner, as if the Government was possessed of as many devils as there were members of the Council. To proceed, however, with the very different treatment of these *male* convicts, at the same time, coming from the same hot-bed of rebellion, and under sentence of the same forbearing Justiciary Commissioners.

After petitioning as above, they were ordered to head-quarters, and lodged ere long in the Canongate Tolbooth. They must have been sent before the end of April; for, after arriving, their case had again to be taken in hand, and remitted to a secret committee of the Privy Council, who dealt with it in the first instance, as we learn from the following entry in the register, dated 8th May 1685:—

"The Lords *of the Committee of*[1] His Majesty's Privy Council, having considered the petitions of James Naipier, Allan Aitken, and John Pearson, *now* prisoners in the Tolbooth of the Canongate, sentenced to die, by the Commissioners appointed by the Council, *at Cumnock*, for alleged reset and corresponding with rebels, and thereafter, upon a *former bill*, reprieved till the twentieth of this instant, do hereby reprieve the said James Naipier, Allan Aitken, and John Pearson, till *further order;* and ordains a letter to be writ in their favours, to the Lords Secretaries of State, recommending to them to interpose with his Sacred Majesty for his royal remission, to the forenamed persons, *in regard they have taken the oath of abjuration*, and hath purged themselves on oath as to the alleged reset, or harbour of rebels, except what was accidental."

The case of the men from Cumnock, however, was not so soon or so easily disposed of as that of the women from Wigtown. With regard to the former, it would appear that the Privy Council had not immediately adopted the favourable deliverance issued by their Committee on the 8th of May. The minister of Glasserton, whose tactic in this contention is to discredit the evidence of the Privy Council records, catches

[1] In our "Case for the Crown," (p. 38), in quoting the above from the Register, the words,—"*the Committee of*"—were inadvertently omitted. The correction is not immaterial.

eagerly at this state of the case, which he only half understands. "Though the Council," he says, "by this minute of the 8th of May, ordained a letter to be written to London in favour of these convicts, *no letter was written:* For, *apparently forgotten by the Council*, they have again to bring their case before them, by 'ane address' on the 5th of June"—(*Hist. Vind.* p. 26). The idea, that the whole Privy Council of Scotland, including all the clerks of Council, had *forgotten*, not only what they had "ordained," but the very existence of these three rebel convicts, and this from the 8th of May to the 5th of June, argues a liveliness of imagination, on the part of our Vindicator of History, scarcely to have been predicated from the solidity of his logic; and the ingenuity with which he presses that idea into the service of his logic is no less remarkable: *Therefore*, (he argues), although the Wigtown women were in point of fact *pardoned* by the Privy Council, there is "no proof that *a pardon from the King came to them;* no proof that a pardon *was ever asked for them by the Council*,—for it appears that the Council's recommendations to mercy were *not always forwarded*"! And so we are asked to believe that every individual statesman, of this great Council of Scotland, had suddenly fallen into a comotose obliviousness about these five convicts, both the men and the women, as complete as if it had been the Council of Laputa! The truth, however, is this: There were, for reasons of State, *several pauses* upon the case of the Cumnock men, a *hitch* in their *intended* pardon, which did not occur in the more simple and inconsequential case of the Wigtown women, this last being *finally* disposed of, so far as the Council were concerned, on the 30th of April. But as for any of these State convicts having been *forgotten*, Queensberry was just as likely to forget to dine. Through the *debris* of the Council papers, the author of the "Case for the Crown" has taken the trouble to hunt these men. We discover various other notices and orders relating to them between the 8th of May and the 5th of June 1685, proving, as might be expected, that the Privy Council, in those sad times, needed no *flappers*. But as we are not writing a history of the three Cumnock heroes,—whose *pardon* by the government of Scotland does not happen to have been *falsified into a martyrdom* for the sake of

Wodrow's "History of Sufferings,"—a short notice of the result will suffice for our present purpose.

They were tried at Cumnock, as already stated, at the end of March or beginning of April 1685, and condemned to die there on the 20th of that same month of April, for complicity with a band of rebels who had been traversing, "*in arms*," the land of westland whiggery, proclaiming the advent of King Campbell. From the Tolbooth of Cumnock these three convicts petitioned the Privy Council, crying *peccavi*, as we learn from the first deliverance upon their "address," whereby their sentence was reprieved until the 20th of May following, upon which day it was to take effect, unless otherwise ordered. It *was* ordered otherwise, for they were ordered to head-quarters, and lodged "in the Tolbooth of the Canongate," prior to the 8th of May 1685. Of that date, "the Lords of *the Committee* of His Majesty's Privy Council" pronounce the *second* deliverance on their petitions, to the effect, namely, of again reprieving them "till farther order," and ordaining meanwhile a letter to be written on their behalf to the Secretaries of State in London, recommending them for the royal clemency, "in regard they have *taken the Oath of Abjuration*, and purged themselves on oath as to the alledged reset or harbour of rebels, except what was accidental." This *Committee* order, not adopted by the Council, was the stage in the proceedings at which, according to our Vindicator of History, they had fallen asleep until awakened by a flapper, in the shape of another petition from the forgotten men, which called forth the final judgment, of date 5th of June 1685. Now, argues our reverend opponent, as the reprieved Cumnock men were *forgotten*, and only saved by timeous flapping, so the reprieved Wigtown women were forgotten also, and drowned there outright (in presence of "*cluds o' folk*," quoth Sir Andrew Agnew), all for *want of a flapper!* But this ingenious logic is utterly destroyed by evidence that, from first to last, the Privy Council of Scotland were wide awake to the case of these three men, whom eventually they *pardoned*.

There can be no question that they were in the Canongate Tolbooth on the 8th of May, for the deliverance in their favour of that date expressly says so. It would rather

seem, however, that, on their first arrival from Cumnock, *viâ* Glasgow, they had been sent to Burntisland, with a host of other prisoners detained there, who were frequently brought from thence to head-quarters, and some of them remanded back to Burntisland; for, as already mentioned (p. cci), the names of the Cumnock men appear in one of the lists signed at Burntisland by "J. Wedderburne," of Gosfoord, and by him reported to the Privy Council, of which he was a member.[1] Again, we find their names in a separate list, also reported by Wedderburne, which is headed, "List of prisoners delivered to Captaine Hamiltone, to be sent over to Edinburgh." There are forty names in this list, of which Nos. 24, 25, and 26 are thus noted:—

"× James Naper, *tested.*
keept. John Person, } *tested.*"
keept. Allan Aitken, }

Of the forty names in this list twenty-three have *crosses* attached to them, as in the above instance of *James Naper*, thus distinguished from his two companions, who are noted to be "*keept*," or detained, their cases being considered less favourable, although it would appear that the whole three had taken both the test oath and the oath of abjuration. The crosses indicate an authority for dismissal, under certain conditions, as appears from the following instructions at the foot of the whole list, written in the Lord Clerk Register's own hand, who had carefully considered the list, the crosses and some short marginal notes being apparently by himself:—

"*Edinr.*, 21 *May* 1685.

"Lett these *crossed* and *tested* goe, unless you find good reasone to detaine them; and try the rest, and report to the Secret Committee.

"TARBAT."

These instructions would seem to have been addressed to Sir William Paterson, the Principal Clerk of Council, acting for

[1] John Wedderburne, a Privy Councillor, was the successor of Sir Peter Wedderburne of Gosfoord, a Senator of the College of Justice as Lord Gosfoord. This corrects a mistake at p. cci. The author erred in supposing that the lists in question had been reported by Lord Gosfoord, which could not be, as he died in 1679. Neither was he President.

the Secret Committee, as we find what follows, of the same date, on a separate sheet:—

"*Edinr. Tolbooth*, 21*st May* 1685.

"In presence of Sir William Paterson, Clerk to His Majesty's Privy Council, by order of the Secret Committee thereof."

Under this heading, follows a list of twenty-eight prisoners, the first in the list being thus named and noted:—"*James Neaper, from Cumnock,—tested—dismist—enacted.*"

In another list, of the same date, which is headed, "*To be dismist and enacted,*" containing *twelve* names of male prisoners, No. 1 is thus named and noted:—"1. *James Neaper,—tested—to enact.*" Then follows a separate list of *eleven* male prisoners, headed, "*ordered to be keept,*" of which Nos. 6 and 7 are the other two Cumnock convicts, thus noted,—"*John Pearson*, 6. *Allan Aitkin*, 7." On the next page of the same sheet appears the following deliverance. It bears no signature, and would seem to be only a draft written out by the Clerk of Council, to be reported to the Secret Committee,—

"21st May 1685.

"His Majesty's High Commissioner, and Lords of the *Secret Committee*, do hereby give order and warrant to the Magistrates of Edinburgh, and keepers of the Tolbooth thereof, to *set at liberty James Neaper*" [*and eleven other male prisoners whose names here follow*] "in regard they have *sworn and signed the test*, and *enacted themselves to live regularly and orderly in time coming*, and to *appear when called*, each of them under the penalty of five hundred merks in case of failure."

Each of the three Cumnock men had already submitted to the *abjuration oath*, as appears by the first deliverance in their favour on the 8th of May. But it would seem from the above that only one of them had fulfilled all the obligations essential to their release, as the other two are not included in the proposed jail-delivery of the 21st of May; which, however, as we shall find, was not eventually adopted, as regards "James Neaper." But surely we have proved enough to relieve us from the dogmatical reproof,—only tending to demonstrate the weakness of our reverend opponent's argument,—that we had asserted "*without* proof and *contrary to probability*," what is the real fact, that these Cumnock convicts only took the abjuration-oath *after* their removal to head-quarters, and as the condition precedent to any favour being shown them. Among

these remnants of the Council papers are many examples to the same effect. *Inter alia:* "The same day"—21st May 1685—"Nicolas M'Neight, a woman, dismist, *on her abjuring* in terms of *the pass.*" This woman, be it observed, had been brought from *Dumfries.* There is also an order, at the same time, for the release of "John Brown, Patrick Jackson, Andrew M'Cartney, and John Williamson, prisoners,—to have their liberty, in regard of their sickness, old age, and poverty, and that *they have abjured* ut supra." Surely we may now also presume to say, that it is neither *without proof,* nor *contrary to probability* that the Wigtown women had in like manner taken the oath of abjuration *prior* to the 30th of April, the date of their *final* recommendation by the Government of Scotland to the clemency of the Crown. And this being so, again we say, what becomes of the Penninghame story, of that oath being urged upon one of these women, on the 11th of May thereafter, while in the agonies of drowning?

Notwithstanding these signs of the Secret Committee intending to release "James Neaper" on the 21st of May, the Privy Council had not adopted that intention. We find, by the Register, that, on the 5th of June following, all the three Cumnock convicts were still in *limbo,* and under the executive jurisdiction of the *Magistrates of Edinburgh,*—just as the Wigtown women are stated to have been on the 30th of April preceding. On the 5th of June, however, the Privy Council again take up the case of these men, the Lord Chancellor, Perth, presiding. From the terms of their deliverance on this occasion, it would appear that a further reprieve, until "the twentieth of June *instant,*" had been granted to these men previously. The fact of their condemnation at Cumnock, and the causes of it, are again recapitulated, and the following deliverance pronounced, granting a further reprieve for *six months,* in terms plainly implying a remission of the sentence of death by the Government of Scotland, under the usual reference to the constitutional fountain of mercy, through the Secretaries in London:—

"The Lords of his Majesty's Privy Council do hereby reprieve the execution of the said sentence until the *first Friday of December next;* and in the meantime *discharges the Magistrates of Edinburgh to put the said*

sentence in execution; but to *continue the saids persons in prison* until the said day; and ordains a letter to be writ to the Lords Secretaries of State to interpose with his sacred Majesty for his gracious remission to them, *for their life only.*"

The record of this letter immediately follows; which, after repeating the facts contained in the several reprieves, goes on to state, that these three Cumnock convicts, having,—

"Cast themselves on the King's mercy, desiring that the execution of the said sentence might be reprieved for such *competent time* as that application may be made for them to his sacred Majesty, for his gracious remission to them, *for their lives only*, to be expede the several offices *gratis*,—The Council have thought fit, in regard of the penitence of the saids three persons, and that *they have sworn and subscribed the oath of the test*, to reprieve the execution of the said sentence until December next, and in the meantime to recommend to your Lordships to interpose with the King's Majesty for a remission to them, *for their lives only*, to be past the several offices *gratis*, because of their known poverty and indigence," &c.[1]

We cannot pretend, in the year 1869, to account for all this coming and going upon the case of these three men in 1685, viewing it as we do through mere fragments of Privy Council notes and minutes accidentally preserved. Neither is that at all necessary to our present argument. We do not undertake to explain how it came to pass, that, while "James Neaper" was still under sentence of death, there appears to have been some intention of releasing him at once, even without the prior sanction of the Crown. It would seem as if the Supreme Government of Scotland did, at this time, in certain cases of little dubiety or consequence to the State, exercise a discretion of acting upon the King's mercy, even prior to the official return of that constitutional sanction; the delinquent, however, being meanwhile under bond to appear when called upon. Be this as it may, the case of the Cumnock men, upon further inquiry, came to be more strictly dealt with. And no wonder. Had the Government been one half as "brutal" as Dr Tulloch pronounces, these men would have been made to undergo their sentence without the slightest hesitation. For besides having been convicted of complicity with Argyle's advanced guard of

[1] See "Case for the Crown," p. 39, where this final deliverance of the Privy Council in the Cumnock case, and the relative letter to the Scotch Secretaries in London, are printed *verbatim et literatim.*

rebels, scouring, "in arms," his kingdom of the west, it was the very crisis when both Monmouth and Argyle, in greedy competition for a Throne, were rushing blindly on their doom. That peril to the State may well have delayed intended leniency towards three rebels of the male sex, brought under sentence of death from the very scene of action. But the result of their case is proof positive that it had neither provoked useless sacrifice nor vindictive cruelty. In tracing the fate of these men (as well as of all the crowd of rebel delinquents, of every kind, thrown on the hands of Government at this time), imperfect as are now the means of doing so, we indeed discover palpable signs of deliberation and discrimination, but not a vestige either of forgetfulness or "brutality." The forbearance of Government in the case of these men is all the more praiseworthy that the fact had come to light of their being *Bothwellbrig fugitives*, whom to have let loose, at least until the arch rebel was disposed of, would have argued an act of reprehensible folly on the part of the guardians of the public safety, and the throne. Hence the recommendation of mercy, in their favour, came to be "for their lives only;" and the Lord Chancellor, Perth, presiding at a subsequent sederunt of the Privy Council, on the last day of June 1685, specially reports the Crown remission in favour of all the three, which thus happens to be referred to in the Register of the *Acta* of the Council, as follows:—

"*Ultimo die Junii*, 1685: His Majesty's remission to Allan Aitken, John Peirson, and James Napper, who were *accessory to the rebellion at Bothwell Bridge*, being *produced* by the Lord High Chancellor, *ordered* that the same be delivered to the King's solicitors, to be by them *expede the several offices*, conform to the tenor thereof."

Now, this was the very day on which the Earl of Argyle was executed. Poor Argyle, whose undignified and ungenerous demeanour, in witnessing the barbarous treatment of Montrose, interferes sadly with sympathy for his own fate, effected a *veni vide* in Scotland in the month of May, which did not conclude like Cæsar's. He was captured on the 18th of June, and executed on the last day of that month. These Cumnock rebels were now of little danger to the State. A great peril was past. The mercy and the justice of the Government of

Scotland, even in those *murderous* times of covenanting anarchy and rebellion, went hand in hand.

But (argues our reverend opponent) the State Register contains *no record* of a *Crown* remission to these women. *Ergo*, the Wigtown Martyrs were *not* pardoned. This is the logic of "History Vindicated." We answer: The Privy Council kept no record whatever of the Sovereign's acquiescence in such recommendations. No such record existed in Scotland at that time. The Council only recorded their own *Acta* and *Decreta*. It might happen that the royal confirmation of their mercy came to be expressly reported by the President at the Council Board, in consequence of some special order being issued thereupon. In the case of the remission to the Cumnock men, which was a serious and doubtful case, the special order was, "that the same be delivered to the King's solicitors, to be by them expede the several offices," *gratis*. But can it possibly be contended that *mere silence* in the Register, on the subject of the Sovereign's acquiescence in a merciful recommendation from the Government of Scotland couched in terms which Wodrow himself admits to be "a material pardon," affords even a shadow of proof that the Sovereign had *rejected* their merciful decree? This would indeed, be a rapid mode of filling to overflowing the cup of calumny against the Stuarts. The reference to the royal clemency in the Cumnock case was not a formal *record* of that fact. It was only an incidental *notice* of it in connection with a particular *order*. But of this there can be no question whatever, that any case in which the *veto* of the Sovereign in London had been opposed to the mercy of the Government in Scotland,—and we know not a single example of the kind in the whole history of the three last Stuarts, although, upon one memorable occasion, the merciful desire of the first Charles was vetoed and paralysed by the truculent spirit of the Covenant,—must, of necessity, have caused the Privy Council to *take action thereupon*, and pronounce some new order of *their own*. Now, while the pardon of these women remains to this day on the State Register, neither in the record of their *Acta*, nor of their *Decreta*, is there the vestige of an order contradicting or annulling their mercy granted

to the "Wigtown Martyrs." *Ergo*, it could not have been *vetoed* by King James. This is the logic of the "Case for the Crown;" and the minister of Glasserton is invited to "examine" it as "freely" as at the outset of his pamphlet he so solemnly threatens to do.

We must not, however, omit to point out what constitutes the chief importance of the Cumnock case, in its bearing upon the present contention. It is *proved*, that those three male convicts were sentenced by the very same Justiciary Commissioners who, a few days later, and on the same circuit, sentenced the two females at Wigtown. It is *proved* that ample time was allowed these men to petition the Privy Council, and that they did so accordingly. It is *admitted* that thus far the cases of the Cumnock men and the Wigtown women are *identical*. It is *proved* (and *admitted*) that the Cumnock petitioners were forthwith transferred to headquarters, eventually pardoned by the Privy Council, and "the Magistrates of Edinburgh *discharged*" of their executive duty of seeing the original sentence of death carried out. It is *admitted* that, in their case, Edinburgh is *not* a clerical error for Cumnock. What then of the *neighbouring* Wigtown women? Will any reasonable being believe, and upon no other evidence whatever, than those Penninghame minutes of "sufferings,"—*presbyterially ordered, ministerially fished for*, and *kirk-sessionally cooked into shape*, a quarter of a century after the events, an intensely *fanatico-political* record, admitted by the head of a Presbyterian College to bear the stamp of ridiculous invention, and, moreover, *positively proved* to be false *in essentialibus*,—will right reason, we say, submit to believe, that these two females, less seriously arraigned, and infinitely less dangerous to the State, than those three Bothwell-brig rebels, were,—as a single exceptional case, of all that crowd of delinquents of both sexes, who had been transferred from every other distant quarter to the seat of Government,—left at the disturbed scene of their condemnation, there to suffer immediately in terms of their sentence, and that by a public drama of immolation, the studied, and absolutely *unique* cruelty of which is only rendered more hideous by its fantastical absurdity?

Nor must our reverend, and very reverend, opponents, be allowed to evade the proper shape of that question now. As the evidence stands, the question is not whether there be any proof that these women were brought to Edinburgh. The proper shape of it is this: It being proved *ex facie* of the State Register, corroborated by analogous proof of the then invariable system of Government in dealing with such delinquents, that these Wigtown women were in the Tolbooth of Edinburgh at the date of their reprieve, has the Principal of St Andrews, or the minister of Glasserton, diminished the force of that rational demonstration, one jot or tittle, by their own mere assumption for the nonce, that the word *Edinburgh*, in the State record, must be a clerical error for the word *Wigtown?* Now, we are in the judgment of every intelligent reader, whether it be possible, upon the evidence adduced, to come to any other conclusion than this, that the Government record in question is vitiated by no clerical error whatever, and that the Wigtown women were in the Tolbooth of Edinburgh on the last day of April 1685, as that record tells us they were.

To the martyrologists this point is of paramount importance, and hence their weak conception of a clerical error. For if these pardoned women were in Edinburgh on the last day of April, that, on the *eleventh day thereafter*, they were executed *at Wigtown*, is not only *morally* impossible under the circumstances, but,—considering the distances, between Edinburgh and London on the one hand, and Edinburgh and Wigtown on the other, as well as the imperfect means for rapid locomotion at that time, —it involves one of those *physical* impossibilities which demand the annihilation of time and space.

The most indulgent of our readers may well cry *Ohe jam satis.* But there is still something for us to do. The Martyrology of the Kirk, it seems, has a kick in it yet.

"T. L.'s" Mare's Nest.

When "History Vindicated" appeared, great as was the exultation of the martyrological brethren, a suspicion seems to have prevailed among them that the Vindicator would himself

be all the better of being vindicated. Accordingly, contributions to back him flowed in upon the daily prints of that persuasion, but more especially into the columns of the *Scotsman* newspaper. A correspondent of this last, signing "T. L," communicated a *discovery* and an *idea*. The idea was nonsense, and the discovery a mare's nest. He suggested, somewhat jesuitically, that, to save the honour and probity of Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh, it is absolutely necessary we should allow him to be convicted of bad grammar, which had caused him to say *two* when he meant *four*. This brilliant conception we disposed of in a former page, when "T. L." was ordered to be re-inclosed.[1] His *discovery* now falls to be dealt with, and somewhat more deliberately.

In the young days of the "Immortal Memory" there arose in miserable Scotland a contention among pamphleteers about *toleration*. The rabbled Episcopalians prayed and pamphleteered to be at least tolerated in their own form of worship. The rabbling Presbyterians, who now ruled the roast in Scotland, maintained intolerance of that same to be a social duty, and a Christian virtue. From among the endless and scattered collections of long forgotten pamphlets which those times engendered, now slumbering unheeded on many a dark and dusty shelf, "T. L." has had the good fortune it seems to wash out a nugget. Let Vindicator hide his diminished head. The wonderful discovery was announced in the following letter to the *Scotsman*, dated August 24, 1867, referred to in a former page:—

"Sir,—I have read with much interest Mr Stewart's valuable contribution to the controversy on the Wigtown martyrs lately reviewed in the columns of the *Scotsman*. I have not, however, seen there, nor, so far as I remember, elsewhere, any allusion to an Episcopal pamphlet of 1703, of which a copy is now before me, and the spirit of which is a sufficient guarantee that it puts the 'Case for the Crown' in the most favourable light possible during the lifetime of the hundreds of witnesses to whom it appeals. What is remarkable in it is, that it distinctly admits the fact that the women were drowned, resents the imputation of illegal procedure, and denies nothing of more consequence than the use of stakes at the execution. The title of the pamphlet is, 'A Short Character of the Presbyterian Spirit, in so far as it can be gathered out of their own Books,

[1] See before, pp. lviii.-lx.

especially out of the Letter from a Gentleman to a Member of Parliament concerning Toleration, the Vindication thereof, and the Remarks upon the Case,' &c. The following is the passage (pp. 6, 7) in which the author takes up the Wigtown case in reply to the second of the above pamphlets (p. 8).

"'He [*the writer against toleration*] says—"*Others were tyed to stakes, within flood-mark, till the sea came up and drowned them, and this without any form or process of law.*" He durst not instance any so treated: I know *they generally talk of* two women in *Galloway*—drown'd they were, indeed, but not *tyed to stakes within flood-mark till the sea came up*, as this malicious vindicator misrepresents; who, it seems, has had no better informer than the frontispiece of that lying, pestiferous, and rebellious lybel, "A Hind let Loose." And what he adds, "*without any form or process of law*," is so manifest a lye, that hundreds in *Galloway* can testify the contrary. They were judicially condemned after the usual solemnities of procedure. The judges were several gentlemen commissioned by authority, of whom Mr D[*avid*] G[*raham*], brother to the then L[*aird*] of Cl[*averhouse*], was one; the Chancellor of the Assize (or foreman of the jury) and clerk of the Court are yet alive. And though the records of that Court *should be lost*,[1] yet the registers of the Privy Council can clear the matter on this point, so that this may for ever stop the lying mouths of such vain bablers, busiebodies, and impudent calumniators, who say that they were drowned without form or process of law. And furthermore, if the vindicator, or any man, shall duly and impartially consider all the circumstances of that affair (a particular account whereof may be hereafter made publick), they will not be very hasty to exclaim against the then governours. Neither can he or any mortal prove that the Episcopal clergy had a hand in that matter, by accusation, information, or any manner of way.'

"Your readers can judge for themselves whether this was the defence likely to be offered in 1703, if it was notorious in Galloway that the reprieve of the 30th April had been acted on."

Who ever said, that, in 1703, "it was *notorious in Galloway* that the *reprieve* of the 30th April had been *acted on*"? Unquestionably, had such been the case, "the defence offered in 1703" would have been couched in very different terms, if, indeed, any defence would then have been needed. But the

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[1] That is, '*are lost.*' They have not been discovered to this day. But, considering what has been discovered, there can be no rational doubt that the minutes of Colonel Douglas's Justiciary Circuit in the western shires, in 1685, would have been the reverse of corroborative of the Penninghame fabrication.

author of this pamphlet, like many others at the time, obviously knew nothing whatever of the *recorded pardon*. The fact, one of no general or public importance, had been lost sight of amid the turbulence of the times. And this eclipse of the truth it was that enabled the Penninghame fable to enter, and take root in, the rank pages of Wodrow with such debasing effect upon the annals, and the national character of Scotland. Long before 1703 the hurricane of the Revolution, during which the records of the fallen dynasty had disappeared, coupled with the mean condition, the inappreciable individuality, and the untraceable subsequent fate of the pardoned women themselves, caused the truth of their inconsequential story to sink into an obscurity very favourable to the conventicle system of incessant fanatical calumnies, but from which no one in those times felt at all interested systematically to redeem it. From deceiving others this persistent race of fanatics soon came to deceive themselves; although, doubtless, many of "our Jacobites," (some of whom Wodrow himself tells us, "*had the impudence to deny it*"), might well know the ridiculous romance to be false. And so the poisonous *fungus* of fabrication with which Alexander Shields overlaid, for the *first time* in 1690, (audaciously *transforming*[1] a previous falsehood into a totally different and more specific shape), this simple and natural incident of mercy and pardon, came to take fanatical root, and to spread, and choke the truth, under the persevering culture of westland whiggism, and the unscrupulous mendaciousness of the conventicle school of the Covenant in the hey-day of the Orange triumph. But to return to "T. L's." mare's nest.

That these convicts had petitioned the Government, and received a pardon in terms of their own petition, are *facts now proved beyond all rational doubt*. Will any intelligent mind entertain the belief that this pamphleteer, who is *mordicus* opposed to there being any truth whatever in Alexander Shields' Wigtown martyrdom, would have remained *absolutely silent* as to facts so essential to the refutation of it, had he been in possession of them? The thing is not possible. Neither is it credible that he could have possessed any specific information

[1] See before p. xciii.; of which more afterwards.

as to the drowning he speaks of, seeing he is in like manner absolutely silent as to *when* they were drowned, *where* they were drowned, *how* they were drowned, *why* they were drowned, and *by whom* they were drowned. That his "drowned they were indeed," is not a positive *assertion from knowledge*, but a *hasty concession from ignorance*, must be manifest to every reasoning and reasonable mind. For this writer is vehemently (though incidentally), defending the fallen Government, and the Episcopalian régime, from the calumny of this very martyrdom. He refers it, and truly, to the author of that "lying pestiferous, and rebellious libel, *A Hind let Loose.*" He declares that the most audacious assertion comprehended in that calumny emanated from the "lying mouths of vain babblers, busy-bodies, and *impudent calumniators.*" Was it not essential to such a defence as this, to explain, (if he really had any knowledge on the subject), under what circumstances it was that these women came to be drowned,—if "drowned indeed" they were? For the Wigtown martyrdom could scarcely be pronounced a calumnious lie if the only dispute in the matter was as to the *particular form* of their execution by drowning. Now, can any reasonable being believe that this Episcopalian would have been so *reticent* of all explanation, so studiously inexplicit, had he not been *altogether ignorant* of those most important predicaments, the when, the where, the how, the why, and the *by whom*, "drowned they were indeed"? And so, his ignorant and unintelligible *concession*, as an argument for the truth of the Wigtown martyrdom, is really not worth the old paper upon which it is printed. For aught it tells us, these obscure women might have been drowned washing in the Solway, or crossing the high seas. Nor are the martyrologists entitled to deduce therefrom one *iota* more, in this contention.

Moreover, it is quite plain, even from the context of this pamphlet, that the writer of it had made *no acquaintance whatever* with the Privy Council registers to which he so vaguely alludes. He was not investigating the Wigtown martyrdom, and never did. He was pre-occupied with the far more important controversy about *Toleration*. He prophecies (and *truly*, as we now know) that "the registers of the Privy Council *can clear* the matter," against the "manifest lie" that these women

" were drowned without form or process of law." But he would there have learned that they were *not drowned at all.* This is not the language of one who had actually inspected the State records, and had read therein that the women *were unequivocally pardoned.* It was not until *twelve years* after the date of this pamphlet that Wodrow, (himself previously ignorant of the fact), first accidentally cast eyes upon the latent, and to him unwelcome pardon. Writing to John M'Bride, minister at Belfast, June 21, 1715, he says,—" When I went in [to Edinburgh] to the Assembly, I very luckily *fell upon* the registers of our Privy Council, in the hands of *private persons,* and there, indeed, I met with a *black scene.* The looking over of these kept me some time in Edinburgh after the Assembly was up." The perverse use he made of those valuable materials we have already sufficiently exposed. The pamphleteer of 1703 little anticipated how long it would be before the best materials for the truth would come to hand, or into what very bad hands they would fall at first. He predicates, indeed, that the truth would eventually prevail. He says—" A particular account of that affair *may be hereafter* made public." He does not say (as has been unwarrantably assumed) that he himself would be the author of that particular account, or that he was then in possession of all the particulars necessary for the task. But he anticipated that justice and truth would eventually prevail against fanaticism and calumny, although he could scarcely have imagined under what adverse circumstances, after what long lapse of time, after what sad desecration of History, the consummation he desired would eventually be brought about. Not before 1715 was the record of the truth first in the hands of Wodrow; and what happened? That traitor to History meanly deceived the public in the form of a *suppressio veri;* for he furnished but a mutilated version of the recorded pardon he had discovered, and still left the lie standing in his "page of History" precisely as he had penned it *prior* (according to his own story) to his discovery of that merciful pardon! Not until 1851 was that State record again consulted on the subject of this Wigtown martyrdom, when the Reverend James Anderson, in the very weakness of his fanatical folly, once more misled the public, and this time in the form of an

allegatio falsi. Not until 1862, a hundred and fifty-nine years after the anticipations contained in this toleration pamphlet of 1703, was that record again inspected on the subject, when at length the truth was fully discovered, and disclosed in "Memorials and Letters of Viscount Dundee."

And so we come to the conclusion that this much vaunted discovery of "drowned they were indeed" is *a mere mare's nest.* But we cannot stop here, for it has begotten another mare's nest of far more portentous dimensions, to which we must now turn our attention.

Parturient Montes.

No sooner had "T. L.'s" little cloud of witnessing, scarcely bigger than a man's hand, appeared in the horizon of the *Scotsman,* than it grew and expanded into a perfect storm of disquisition, speculation, quotation, exasperation, and exultation, flooding the columns of that martyr-ridden journal. The minister of Glasserton's devoted trumpeter and shield-bearer has occupied no less than seven of those formidable columns, in two separate articles, with his "*Iö triumphe*" for "History Vindicated." Three columns and a-half, composing article second, is devoted to T. L.'s discovery. It consists of a critical inquiry, involving a vast deal of poking and grubbing among these political pamphlets of the troubled year 1703, for the purpose of discovering the name, calling, and parentage of the anonymous author who has furnished the martyrologists with the precious information—to them as manna in the wilderness—that "drowned they were indeed." Patiently and curiously puzzled out, by an unerring nose for such minute questing, at length the author of this Episcopalian pamphlet stands revealed as one "Matthias Symson."

Nascetur ridiculus mus.

This Matthias Symson, it seems, was the son of the reverend Andrew Symson, curate of Kirkinner in 1684, whom we have already mentioned as having in that year transmitted the usual official list, of the inhabitants of each parish respectively, a

Government measure then rendered necessary by the worse than Fenianism of the day.[1] Doubtless this clergyman must have known something about his parishioner old Margaret Lauchlison, for the word "disorderly" is noted against her name among a few others under the same stigma. Matthias, Andrew Symson's son, was a student of divinity in 1700, and set up a small printing-house in Edinburgh, which, ere long, was taken charge of by his father Andrew, "one of the suffering clergy," who, there is reason to believe, printed his son's toleration pamphlet in 1703. But Andrew Symson ceased from types, troubles, and troubling in 1712, three years *prior* to Wodrow's discovery of the Privy Council records "in the hands of private persons." By this time, also, his son Matthias was prosecuting his studies for the English Church, and following his clerical fortunes in the sister kingdom, where eventually he became a rector, and a Canon of Lincoln.

Such is the sum and substance of all the information disclosed about these individuals. It is unfolded to us through a bewildering labyrinth of minute critical investigation written much after the manner of Martinus Scriblerus, *minus* the wit, —with the exception of one brilliant sally about a "Mexican official under Juarez," a stray drop, as it were, of the old vinegar of the Conventicles fermenting in a *Newbottle* to be broken over the head of the Defender of Dundee.

But what matters it after all that we have *the name* of the author of this pamphlet. What matters it to know that he was one Matthias Symson, a small printer in Edinburgh, who eventually became a rector in England and a Canon of Lincoln? It is no more to the purpose of this question than if he had been Whittington afterwards Lord Mayor of London. And what matters it that he was the son of Andrew Symson curate of Kirkinner in 1684, who (after being rabbled) was joined with his son in the small printing line, and aided in bringing forth this same toleration pamphlet in 1703? That fact, if a fact it be (and we have no disposition to impugn it), only lends so much additional weight of truth to the vehement assertions therein contained, that the story of the Wigtown martyrs is a

[1] See before, p. cxcvi.

"pestiferous and rebellious libel," emanating from the "lying mouths of impudent calumniators."

Is the testimony of these witnesses really evidence which the minister of Glasserton will venture to claim in support of his "History Vindicated"? What becomes of his main argument, the unbroken, undeviating, unchallenged *tradition* of this most marvellous of martyrdoms? The Penninghame fabrication of 1711 is our reverend opponent's *testament* in this contention. He will not bate one jot or tittle of the fantastical romance, even to the *death-doom* of a girl "not thirteen" for refusing the abjuration oath! He maintains that the members of that kirk-session were, or might have been, *eye-witnesses* to all those incredible facts, for "the truth of which," he says, "they *made themselves responsible.*" Well then, that the women were tied to stakes until the water overwhelmed them, is a fact as essential to the Wigtown martyrdom, as the fact that Ridley and Latimer were tied to stakes until the flames overwhelmed them is to their martyrdom: or as the gallows is to the martyrdom of Montrose, or the block to the martyrdom of his royal master. But if the mode of martyring be left absolutely *in nubibus* what becomes of the martyrdom? Now, what say Messrs Symson and Son on that subject? "Drowned they were indeed, but *not tied to stakes within flood-mark till the sea came up*, as this *malicious* vindicator misrepresents." *This* at least won't suit "History Vindicated." But if this writer believed (and he speaks as if he did), that drowned these women were, though not drowned as described in the *libretto* of that famous water-opera,—and if, nevertheless, he did *not* know (or he would have told), *how* they were drowned,—what is the value of his evidence as to their having been drowned at all? And, at any rate, of what conceivable value can his testimony be to the martyrologists in the present question? Yet the Glasserton Aid in the *Scotsman* founds upon Matthias's testimony as conclusive of the whole debate; and that because of his *unquestionable omniscience* as regards the entire history and fate of these martyrs! We shall now quote this commentator's gloze upon that testimony, marking by italics the most note-worthy passages. He is here actually speaking of Matthias Symson's vehement denunciation of the "*lying libel*":—

"What *at once impresses the reader* of this passage is, the *conviction* that the writer, whoever he was, was *thoroughly conversant* with *all the circumstances* of the case. He speaks as one who had *personal knowledge of the whole matter*. He knew who were the judges, who the jury, and who the clerk of the court. He could assert that the women were 'judicially condemned after the usual solemnities of procedure;' he knew that the case had come before the Privy Council; he knew that, though they were drowned, they were not drowned in the manner represented in the frontispiece to the '*Hind let Loose;*'[1] he indicates that *all the circumstances* of that affair were not generally known, but that *he* was acquainted with them; that not improbably *he* might be induced to publish a particular account of them in vindication of 'the then Governours' (*a curious confirmation* of the opinion *held by many* that, in so far as the *actual execution* of the women was concerned, the Government was *not directly concerned*, and that it was occasioned by some local circumstances, *to which we have now no certain clue*); and he maintains that the Episcopal clergy of the district had no 'hand in the matter by accusation, information, or any manner of way.'"

Reverend Vindicator of History, your marrow in the *Scotsman* appears to be committing an infidelity. If this be an accurate exposition of Matthias Symson's actual *personal knowledge* of "all the circumstances" of the Wigtown martyrdom, down go your Kirkinner and Penninghame infallibles—your eye-witnesses—into the *limbo* of "pestiferous lying." And beware of that jesuitical parenthesis, somewhat clumsily crammed into the context of his glozing. Look how it *acquits* the Stuart Government of your *time-honoured* accusation, and resolves the martyrdom itself into *a myth!* "It was *occasioned* by some *local* circumstances to which we have now *no certain clue.*" What,—not even from the kirk-session of Penninghame? Who are "the many" of the brethren that ever ventured to moot that opinion before? Never was there such a dodge, save in Homer, whose heathen heroes, when dead beat, were not ashamed to make their escape in an impenetrable cloud.

Matthias Symson's testimony of 1703 stands diametrically opposed in point of fact to the Penninghame fabrication of 1711. His commentator in the *Scotsman*, the most earnest supporter of "History Vindicated," anxiously maintains, even

[1] This is not fairly stated. Matthias Symson denies, not merely that these women were tied back to back to the same stake, as represented in the frontispiece to "A Hind let Loose," but that they were "*tied to stakes within flood-mark till the sea came up.*"

against a fair construction of Matthias Symson's own text, that that Episcopalian pamphleteer was *personally omniscient* as to every particular of the Wigtown martyrdom, and therefore *cannot be doubted.* What follows? Why, that this statement in the Penninghame fabrication,—"The old woman's stake was a good way in beyond the other, in order to *terrify* the other to a compliance with such oaths and conditions as they required,"—is (*inter alia*) as false in point of fact as it is ridiculously improbable. But the Glasserton champion is not to be defeated either by the principles of evidence or the rules of logic. Untrammelled by any such conditions of the reasoning process, no sooner has he thus pronounced and founded upon the *infallible knowledge* of his witness Matthias Symson, than he produces another witness, diametrically opposed to him, to knock him down!

Matthias, in this pamphlet of his,—"A Short Character of the Presbyterian Spirit,"—is replying (*inter alia*) to an anti-toleration pamphlet, entitled "Toleration's Fence Removed," written in 1703, and attributed to an intolerant Cameronian minister of the name of James Ramsay, who was translated from Eyemouth to Kelso in 1707. In this latter pamphlet the following *parrot repetition* of Alexander Shields' calumnious falsehood, first fabricated in 1690, occurs:—

"It's well enough known that poor women were executed in the Grassmercat, sure it was not for rising in arms against the king. *Others of them were tyed to stakes within flood-mark till the sea came up and drowned them, and this without any form or process of law.*"

To this Matthias replied as we have already seen. His opponent, *James Ramsay*, of a school of divinity that stuck at nothing in the way of calumny against the fallen dynasty, thus returned to the charge:—

"He takes upon him to deny that the poor women spoke of in *Toleration's Fence Removed* were tied to stakes within flood-mark till the sea came up and drowned them; and yet *I have a paper from eye and ear witnesses of that abominable fact;* yea, and though the soldiers, *by virtue of an order from the Council,* made some *sham trial* before they did *thus execute* these women, it may be well said they died without any due form or process. And nothing can be more unaccountable than to grant such a power to soldiers to kill whomsoever they met on the road, or found at

their work, if they would not give them satisfaction in such matters as they were allowed to interrogate them upon; and not a few were *thus summarily executed.*"

Will any man of ordinary intelligence attach the slightest credit to this blundering assertion that *these women* were "*summarily* executed *by soldiers*," and at the same time by the slow and elaborate process of being "tied to stakes within flood-mark till the sea came up and drowned them"? This is one of those notable examples which so fully justify Bishop Russell in that historical judgment, already quoted, —"In the conduct of the rigid Covenanters there is nothing more remarkable than their disposition to *slander*, and the *reckless intrepidity* with which they scattered around them *the most atrocious calumnies.*" Fortunately, however, for the cause of truth and justice, this reckless Cameronian, by the very terms in which he has framed his falsehood, has dug the grave of his own veracity.

In 1684 there *was* an order of Council to the effect of allowing *summary* executions by soldiers. But it was a temporary measure (under strict regulation) of protection against *midnight murder*. It could not possibly have been applied in the case of the two *women pardoned* in 1685. Nor could it have been applied in the extraordinary and difficult manner which this unscrupulous calumniator so obstinately maintains,—and maintains without venturing to produce the important proof he pretends to possess, of "a paper from eye and ear witnesses." It is a great relief to turn from such palpable falsification as this, to the testimony of a most accomplished gentleman, a man of the highest probity and honour, and one who of all others had the best means of knowing the truth,—Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh, at the close of his life.

"As to the Act made in Council, *allowing soldiers to kill such as refused to own the King's authority:* It is answered, that, there being many proclamations issued out by the Dissenters, declaring, *that the King had forfeited his right by breaking the Covenant, and that therefore it was lawful to kill him, and those who served him*,—many accordingly being killed,—it was thought necessary by some (upon the *fresh news* of murdering some of the King's Horse Guard at *Swine Abbey*, in their beds), to terrify them off this extravagancy, by allowing the soldiers to use them as in a war, in which, if any call, '*for whom are you*,' and the others owning that '*they*

were for the enemy,'—it is lawful then to kill: and thus they felt *their* folly, and the *necessary effects of their principle:* yet still it was *ordered*, that *none should be killed except those who were found in arms, and owning that principle of assassination*, and *refusing* to clear themselves of their having been in accession to the *declaring of war*, which they had then begun: Nor were these killed but when *their deliberate refusal could be proved by two witnesses.* But that it may the more plainly appear that no more was in all this intended, by the Governors, than to *secure the public peace*, by terrifying those *assassins* who had so manifestly invaded it, secret orders were given that this *should not last above a fortnight;* and that none should be killed except those who were found in the *publicly printed list of declared Rebels*, who may be killed by the laws of all nations: And but *very few* even of these rebels were killed,—*though this has been made the foundation of many dreadful lies.* This mischief was *intolerable* in itself; and we desire to know how it could have been otherwise remedied; for *the law must find cures for all mischiefs*, and those who occasioned them should of all others be least allowed to complain."—(*Sir George Mackenzie's Works*, vol. ii. p. 346).

A mind possessing any clearness on the subject will have little difficulty in arriving at the conclusion, that, of the two testimonies above quoted, (the Reverend James Ramsay's and Sir George Mackenzie's), the latter contains the truth, and nothing but the truth, while the former has no truth in it. Indeed the Cameronian minister's statement destroys itself, as the following observations may suffice to show.

Firstly,—He says,—"*I have a paper* from eye and ear witnesses of that abominable fact." Now, of what fact does he speak? Why, of the ostentatiously public execution of these two women, by the difficult and tedious operation of being tied to stakes within the flow of the Solway tide, and that under the executive responsibility of the *Magistrates of Wigtown.* That is the story, and the *only story we have ever had* of the drowning of these women tied to stakes. Yet this pamphleteer, manifestly ignorant of their real history, refers these elaborate proceedings to "*soldiers*, by virtue of an *order from the Council*, who made some *sham trial* before they did *thus execute* these women."[1] That the "order in Council," here referred to, means the same which the ex-Lord Advocate has explained, cannot be doubted. But that was issued in 1684 to

[1] We now know this account of what happened to these State convicts to be an unmitigated falsehood.

meet an alarming crisis in the reign of Charles II. It was aimed at secret armed rebels, and midnight assassins, whose desperate doings called for the immediate remedy of martial law, and a *very summary* procedure. That it was applied in the case of two insignificant *women* in 1685, (against whom there could not possibly have been the slightest *excitement*, in any quarter, and in whose favour a *pardon* actually stands recorded in the State Register), and by *soldiers* adopting a most elaborate mode of public execution the very preparations for which must have occupied no small amount of time, and skill of workmen, is an anachronism that bears falsehood on the very face of it. That peculiar mode of execution could only have been decreed (if decreed in those terms it was, of which we have no proof), under their *judicial sentence;* in which case it would be at least intelligible, being consistent with that same reluctance to proceed to the last extremity which was certainly evinced, both in their case and that of the men from Cumnock, by the postponement of the execution of their sentence to a distant day. That fact, which has never entered any account of this mendacious martyrdom, can only be accounted for by feelings of humanity influencing their distinguished Judges.

Secondly,—Why did not the Reverend James Ramsay then and there *produce* that "paper from eye and ear witnesses"? Could there have been a more conclusive answer to his Episcopalian contradictor? And how came it, that the great historian of such "sufferings," the indefatigable and universal collector of such papers, public and private, was never put in possession of this document, which would have been invaluable to him? Instead of that we have only Wodrow's own subterfuge to the same tune; and the like from the kirk-session of Penninghame.[1] The mere word of a Cameronian minister, of the year 1703, is but a sorry substitute for the actual production of evidence so important to their cause. *No written statement of the kind has ever been produced throughout a period of nearly two centuries.* "De non apparentibus et non existentibus eadem est ratio."

Yet such is the confidence with which this new evidence has

[1] See before, p. xcvii.

inspired the learned commentator on Matthias, that he thus exultingly concludes,—"We hardly think that even Mr Napier will continue sceptical. Certainly *no other sane man in Scotland can.*" Nevertheless, if to harbour any doubt of the Wigtown martyrdom be next door to insanity in Scotland, (and we believe it to be just the other way), there are some symptoms in this enthusiast's own lucubrations of his *vergens ad insaniam* also. Despite his dogmatism he is still haunted by doubts. Justly vain of having "examined some *forty* or *fifty* pamphlets belonging to the year 1703 alone," even this great pamphlet-pundit feels a little nonplused, and implores some one else to renew "the dreary task of wading through volumes of pamphlets of that day." To encourage such devoted adventurer again to enter this uncultivated *Bush* of letters, he tells him,—"It is far from improbable that further evidence will be found among them—indeed, the '*particular account of that affair,*' promised by Matthias Symson, may yet turn out to have been published." What! unbeknown to Wodrow? But he adds,—"We trust that some *real*, and not mere *superficial* investigator—some one who is *honestly searching for truth*, and not to *buttress up a preconceived opinion*, will give them a thorough examination." That this martyrologist should sometimes be visited by qualms of doubt is not surprising; but we did not look for so severe a character of himself from his own pen. Neither was it to be expected, that, after insisting upon the *omniscience* of this Matthias Symson, in reference to the "Wigtown Martyrs," he should turn upon the witness he had so magnified, and exulted in, for daring to deny that they were tied to stakes in the Solway. "It seems clear," he says, "that there is here some *pitiful quibbling*—quibbling *as pitiful* as that of Mr Napier on the same subject in his '*Case for the Crown.*'" This witness may go. But there is a yet more conclusive answer to Matthias Symson's "drowned they were indeed." We have proved that *no such fact* was known to the rebel prompters of the Orange faction about the *very time*, and from the *very locality*, of the alleged drowning. Did Matthias, in 1703, know better than they did in 1685? But of this in next section.

Of the general calumny against the Government of Charles II. for the "drowning of women," *which was transformed into the specific calumny of the* "Wigtown Martyrs" *against the Government of James II. by Alexander Shields in* 1690.

When Sir George Mackenzie denounced the "many dreadful lies," emanating from the murderous fanatics in Scotland and Holland, to promote the Orange invasion after the collapse of Argyle, he meant no allusion whatever to the "Wigtown Martyrs." Had that rubbish ever reached his ears, it would have met with an unanswerable refutation from himself, and in a single sentence; for these women were *pardoned*, and that *under his own sanction and recommendation* as first law-officer of the Crown. This being the actual state of the case, it is not *in natura rerum* that the ex-Lord Advocate of the Stuarts would have failed to notice it, had that audacious fabrication ever reached either his ear or his eye.

But the *innominate* calumny, expressly directed against his royal master, *Charles the Second*, of the "drowning of women," assuredly had reached him. For, just before his noble spirit fled, *that* calumny received, under his own hand, a most annihilating refutation,—were it possible for truth in this world to annihilate falsehood. He declared, as a fact necessarily within his own personal and perfect knowledge, that, throughout the whole reigns of the two last Stuarts, "*but two women were executed*"; and they, he says, (we must here again repeat his very words), "were punished for most heinous crimes, which no sex should defend: Their crimes were, that they had recepted and entertained, for many months together, *the murtherers of the Archbishop of St Andrews*, who were likewise *condemned traitors* for having been openly in rebellion at Bothwell; whereupon they having been prosecuted, *declined the King's authority as being an enemy to God, and the Devil's vicegerent:* And although a *pardon was offered to them* upon their repentance, they were so far from accepting it that they owned the crimes to be duties: And our accusers should remember that these women were executed for higher crimes than the following Montrose's camp, for which *fourscore*

women and children were drowned, being all in one day thrown over the bridge at Linlithgow by the Covenanters, and *six more* at Elgin, by the same faction, all *without sentence or the least formality of law.*"

Now, there is not the slightest allusion here to the "Wigtown Martyrs." Will that, too, be referred to "some pitiful quibbling"? Surely not: for the *true* history of these female convicts, *as we now know it,* would have afforded Sir George his most triumphant defence, had that particular accusation ever reached him. But what is more to the point still, the bitter Cameronian himself, who so elaborately replied to Sir George's "Vindication" in the same year (1691) in which it was published, makes no allusion whatever to the case of the "Wigtown Martyrs." On the contrary, he tacitly admits, as already shewn, the whole of Sir George's statement relating to women.[1]

Why, then, it may be asked, did the ex-Lord Advocate come to speak of drowning women at all? Now, this is a question which our martyrologists have never ventured to investigate, and have never chosen to understand. The answer is, that, for several years before there was any idea of accusing the Government of *James* II. of the execution of these two women, that "dreadful lie" had only assumed its *chrysalis* form of accusing the Government of *Charles* II., *in general terms,* of the "drowning of women." But blind to its bearing against his case, the minister of Glasserton himself actually urges the plea that no such cruelty was ever even charged against the reign of Charles II.! He insists that "*A Hind let Loose*" does contain "a reference to the *Wigtown women.*" Not that he finds them *named* therein, but because he considers that they *must* have been meant, and that this *must* have been known to the ex-Lord Advocate. And so he falls into a pit of his own digging in the following argument:—"His (Sir George Mackenzie's) Government was here *plainly enough* charged with the drowning of *these two women,* for *he knew* that there was *no other case* of the kind of which they could be accused."—(*Hist. Vind.* p. 28.) Nay, Sir George knew well that *no case* of the kind had ever occurred. But our

[1] See before, p. lxii.

reverend opponent reiterates his suicidal statement more explicitly afterwards (p. 58),—"Mr Ker and the elders of Wigtown included '*drowning*' in the list of the sins of the late unhappy times that had still to be laid to heart and mourned over: How could they have done so had the *only persons* sentenced to that death never suffered it? *Except the two women in question, it is not said that any other was put to death by drowning"!* A total mistake. From 1685 to 1688 inclusive, the "drowning of women" *was* charged, and *ad nauseam*, (as we shall presently shew), against Charles II. and his government of Scotland. To that calumny, (*inter alia*), against the monarch who was his patron, and whom he chiefly served, Sir George Mackenzie's "Vindication" is expressly addressed. It is entitled "A Vindication of the Goverment in Scotland during the reign of *King Charles* II., against misrepresentations made in several scandalous pamphlets." This has no relation to the case of the "Wigtown Martyrs" in the reign of James II. For, although in that emphatic declaration of his, that the two women hanged at Edinburgh, in the reign of *Charles*, were the only State convicts of the female sex who suffered death, throughout the whole course of "*both* reigns," this reference to the reign of James is merely incidental, and a passing allusion. The specific calumny of the Wigtown martyrdom in the latter reign was *never stated at all* until 1690; and as Sir George's "Vindication" must have been undertaken and completed at latest in that year, he having died in London in the spring of 1691, there is no reason to believe that Alexander Shields' paltry paper of "grievances," printed in 1690, had ever been brought under the notice of the ex-Lord Advocate.

That the fanatics did so calumniate Charles II. we have already proved.[1] The point, however, is of great importance to the present inquiry; and it may be as well, in conclusion, to recal the attention of intelligent and impartial readers more particularly to that annihilating fact, while illustrating it a little farther.

[1] See before, p. xciii.

How Charles II. *was vilified by James Renwick, Alexander and Michael Shields, and the Prince of Orange for the* drowning of women,—*and why.*

1. *The Informatory Vindication* :—This vile print, as already mentioned, was drawn up in 1687, at the requisition of the "Society People," by James Renwick, the "last of the martyrs," hanged by the whig Lord Advocate, Sir John Dalrymple, in 1688, when he superseded Sir George Mackenzie in that office. It was sent to Holland to be printed, and then returned to Scotland, where it was sown broadcast over the unhappy land which it at once deluded and defiled. It sickens one to read the enormous lying of its vicious commination against the falling dynasty. But what we have to do with now is the fact, that while it distinctly and expressly accuses the "tyrant Charles II." of the drowning of women, and as a general characteristic of his cruel disposition and reign, it contains not the slightest allusion to the "Wigtown Martyrs" throughout 232 pages of the lowest abuse. Amid "many dreadful lies" indeed, heaped upon that monarch's memory, the following occurs:—"*His drowning women*, some very young, and some of exceeding old age" (p. 41). All this is expressly imputed to the "tyranny of *Charles the Second*,—declaring that his whole government was a complete and habitual *tyranny*, and no more *magistracy* than robbery is a rightful possession." Now, surely the fanatic who penned this nonsensical falsehood was not likely to have omitted, as he does, all mention of the "Wigtown martyrs" in the equally foul abuse, which immediately follows, of the "usurpation of James Duke of York," had he known of any such event having occurred in his reign. Renwick was in the fulness of his career in 1685. It was his own atrocious proclamations, affixed to church doors and market crosses in 1684, and the *prompted* murders which immediately followed, that gave rise to the temporary martial law, and the subsequent abjuration oath, in that year, —the very oath for the refusal of which these Wigtown women are said to have been sacrificed in 1685. Why, then,

did he never mention *their* martyrdom? *Because he was hanged before that particular falsehood was fabricated.*

2. *Renwick's Letters.*—When we turn to Renwick's correspondence we find him preserving the same *absolute silence throughout,* as to the Wigtown martyrdom, and that, too, at the *very time* when it is said to have occurred. Was Matthias Symson, in 1703, better informed than James Renwick in 1685, as to this story of drowning about which Matthias himself *could communicate nothing?*

A collection of fanatical letters, ranging from 1663 to 1689, was printed in 1764. Their character will be understood from the fact that *sixty-one* of these are from Renwick to his disciples, and the rest from such Scottish worthies as King, Cargill, Cameron, Alexander Shields, and his brother Michael. It is a notable fact that throughout the whole of this voluminous collection, embracing the very period of the alleged martyrdom at Wigtown, these women are *not once mentioned.*[1] One from Renwick bears date Edinburgh, May 13, 1685, two days after the date assigned to the Wigtown tragedy, but there is no allusion to it whatever. If it be said that the news could not yet have reached Edinburgh, their impending fate, at least, would surely have been on his mind; for the fact of their being condemned on the 13th of April preceding must have been known to him. Yet a shadow of their fate seems never to have crossed the mind of this ever busy fanatic. Then follows another letter from him, dated July 9, 1685, about *two months after* the date assigned to the martyrdom, and still there is not an allusion to this greatest and most interesting of all the "sufferings." Yet this letter is feculent with "our news" of martyrdoms, and sufferings, and dangers of the "faithful contenders" great and small. Again, of date February 18, 1686, he thus writes to some fanatics in Friesland: —"God hath taken, *this last year* (1685), many from us by

[1] This rare volume was lent to the author by the late Dr Joseph Robertson, of the Register House, (whose untimely loss to the letters of Scotland is never to be sufficiently lamented), prior to the publication of the "Case for the Crown,"—where see it referred to, page 79. This very learned historical antiquary, and accomplished man, became thoroughly satisfied that the "Wigtown martyrs" were a fanatical fabrication.

banishment, and by death on *scaffolds*, especially on the fields, where *none* for the most part were to *see them die but the executioners.*" But what of the "cluds o' folk," (as Sir Andrew Agnew phrases it), who, if there be truth in the story, *did* "see them die" at Wigtown, and under circumstances which render it perfectly inexplicable why they were not rescued, and their murderers, "soldiers," or "high-handed provincial agents," (whatever that may mean), torn to pieces? For is it not *proved* that these women had received a *pardon*, on their own petitions, from the Privy Council of Scotland, and that that pardon was finally recorded in the State Register just *eleven days* prior to this incredible scene? Nevertheless, not one word on the subject is to be found in this letter of Renwick's, written only nine months after an event so astounding! Then there is another letter from him, dated May 3, 1686, not quite a twelvemonth after that event, addressed to the infamous Robert Hamilton, whom his own tutor Burnet describes as "an ignominious coward under the show of a hero," and Lord Macaulay denounces as "a blood-thirsty ruffian." *Something* to him on the subject, from his bosom friend Renwick, might have been expected to appear in that epistle, in which he gives him a particular account of his peregrinations, and treasonable agitations, through Clydesdale, Eskdale, the Forest, Annandale, and *Galloway.* But here, again, not a single syllable is expended upon the most remarkable, and the most exciting, of all the conventicle sufferings. This barbarous murder of two of his own martyrs of the female sex,—for if martyred it was *Renwick's* doing,—elicits from him not a word of reproach when speaking of the very locality. He had not even bestowed a tear upon their (so called) graves at Wigtown, on which the grass could scarcely then have been green!

3. *Michael Shields' Letters.*—There is only one allusion to the drowning of women to be found in the above mentioned fanatical collection. It occurs in a letter dated March 2, 1687, from Michael Shields, Secretary to the "Society People," and brother to Alexander Shields. Michael of "the Wanderers," greater with those outlaws than Michael of the Angels,

addresses this epistle, couched in the usual virulent and mendacious strain, to "Friends in Ireland." It contains (*inter alia*) a treasonable apology for the treasonable proceedings of the fugitive tribe of Renwick, and for the murderous proclamations of their yet unhanged apostle. Of course he inveighs bitterly against "*an oath abjuring the same*,"—a topic which surely might have led him to speak of that super-human resistance, of feminine faith, to that very oath, so publicly exhibited at Wigtown not quite two years before. He alludes, indeed, though very shyly, to the backsliding of his brother Alexander, who, while urging resistance, to that abjuration of murder and assassination, upon others, especially poor excited ignorant women, as the price of *their* salvation, swallowed it himself as the price of his own life! This he did on the 6th of August 1685, not quite *three months* after the glorious example of martyrdom set him by two of his own sainted disciples in the "devouring waves" of the Solway! Yet of this beautiful sacrifice we have here not one word from his brother Michael. He does not fail, however, to visit with the full measure of fanatical calumny that *fortnight's martial law* against assassination and midnight murder then stalking the land. We shall quote his own words, which *cannot be applied to the Wigtown case*,—

"We cannot recount the number of our dear brethren that we lost in this *deluge of blood* that was shed at this time by *soldiers*, and some gentlemen, that made it their work to kill us wherever we could be found, *without either trial or sentence*, or *time to prepare for death*, or respect to age or sex; *even women*, some of a very young, some of an old age, being *drowned in their fury*. But in the mean time of *the height of this rage*, the Lord did remove the *tyrant Charles II. which did put some stop to it.* Thereafter, when his brother *James Duke of York* was proclaimed, and a Parliament convocated for establishing him in his usurpation, we resolved upon a *testimony* against the same, and so emitted *another declaration at Sanquhar*, May 28. 1685."

But what of the recent scene of martyrdom on the *eleventh* of May 1685? *Not one word*, either in this letter or at Sanquhar. Now, as the Wigtown women were both *tried* and *sentenced*, and that before a jury of fifteen sworn men, under a royal Commission of Justiciary, and, moreover, as a whole month was allowed them to "prepare for death,"—in other words, to

prepare a petition for life which was granted,—and as they had nothing to do with the "Tyrant Charles II.," it cannot possibly be maintained that the above accusation of the drowning of women has any reference to the "Wigtown Martyrs." But is it possible that this railer, writing about the very time, could have been *silent* as to such a scene had it ever occurred?

4. *Alexander Shields' Hind let Loose, and Life of Renwick.*—We come now to search the scriptures of the fanatic, or lunatic, who may be called the author of the "Wigtown Martyrs." Our reverend opponent thus refers to the "Hind let Loose," which is one of his leading proofs:—

"The pamphlet, *A Hind let Loose*, written, *it is said*,[1] by Alexander Shields, and published by the Societies in 1687, has, as has been shown above, a statement *very clearly referring to the execution at Wigtown*: 'Neither were women spared; but some were hanged, some drowned, tied to stakes within the sea-mark to be devoured gradually with the growing waves, and some of them of a very young, some of an old age.'" —(*Hist. Vind.*, pp. 28 *and* 337.)

Upon the assumption that this general statement really refers to the *unique* execution at Wigtown, it would be perfectly inexplicable how such a writer as this should have referred to the only dramatically tragic martyrdom that illustrates the Sufferings of the Kirk, in a manner so cursory and inexplicit. How he *could* forbear naming the women, or distinguishing that martyrdom *par excellence* by some special outburst of abuse and glorification, is quite unaccountable upon the minister of Glasserton's supposition. This volume (for it is not a mere pamphlet) was printed for the "Society People," in 1687, when the heart of

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[1] "Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words."—*Genesis*, xlix. 21. There is no doubt that the vile book under this Scriptural title, and which is characterised with such just severity by Lord Macaulay, *was* written by Alexander Shields, in 1686-7. There is abundance of authority for this. *Inter alia*, in a fanatical memoir of him (to be afterwards noticed), attached to his *Life of Renwick*, published from his own manuscript, in 1724, and edited by a congenial spirit,—Alexander Shields is described as "the worthy author whose excellent abilities are well discovered in that accurate and unanswerable *Hind let Loose*"! But even the General Assembly of the Kirk, in 1690, rejected and repudiated with scorn its doctrines, its acts, and its author.

all Scotland must have been still throbbing with the excitement occasioned by so terrible an event. Why did this man forego the immense advantage to his sect of *specifically recording the tragedy* instead of *generalizing* the accusation in a form so inefficient? *Because he had not yet fabricated that lie.*

The fact is, that the whole context of Alexander Shields' virulent calumnies goes to prove, that, in this instance, he is just taking up the song of his brother Michael against *Charles* II., whom he calls "a tyrant as infamous for villany as for violence." The accusation about the drowning of women is in immediate connection with the execution of the two women in Charles' reign, and other protective measures of severity, which were called for before the reign of James had commenced. The words,—"some of them of a very young, some of an old age," are *the very same* which we find in the letter, dated March 2, 1687, written by his brother Michael, who points that accusation *expressly* against "the Tyrant Charles II." In like manner, in this "Hind let Loose," printed in the same year, Alexander Shields winds up his violent tirade against Charles with this reference to his death: "In the beginning of this killing time, as the country called it, the first *author* and *authoriser* of all these mischiefs, Charles II., was removed by death." And what is *conclusive*, the libeller, entering next upon his abuse of James II., again adopts the very terms used by his brother Michael, terms which cannot possibly be made to apply to the circumstances of the Wigtown case, as the following extract will suffice to shew:—

"Immediately upon his (James) mounting the throne, the executions and acts prosecuting the persecution of the poor wanderers were more cruel than ever. There were more butchered and slaughtered in the fields, without all *shadow of law*, or *trial*, or *sentence*, than in all the former tyrant's reign; who were murdered *without time given to deliberate* upon death, or space to conclude their prayers," &c.[1]—(The *Hind*, p. 200.)

But what about *drowning*—what of the "Wigtown Martyrs,"

[1] The whole of this is intensely false. It will be observed that Matthias Symson's contradictor, Ramsay, just repeats, like a parrot, the words of the "*Hind let Loose.*" (See before, p. ccxxvi.)

who are now *proved* to have been *tried by jury, sentenced,* and *pardoned* in the reign of James II.? *Not one word!*

We do find, however, in this same "pestiferous libel,"—as Matthias Symson very truly characterised it,—certain other accusations of a different kind, and not at all inapplicable to the true history both of the Wigtown women and the Cumnock men. We recommend to the study of our reverend and diligent opponent the following passage from Alexander Shields' abuse of the government of James II.—(The *Hind,* p. 201):—

"And such as were *prisoners* were *condemned* for *refusing to take the Oath of Abjuration,* and to own the authority, and surprised with their executions, not knowing certainly the time when it should be; yea, left in suspense *whether it should be or not,* as if it had been on design to *destroy both their souls and bodies.* Yea, Queensberry had the impudence to express his desire of it, when *some* went to solicit him, being then Commissioner, for a *reprieval* in favour of *some* of them, he told them they should not have time to prepare for heaven, hell was too good for them"

But what of the *pardon* of the Wigtown women, and also of the Cumnock men, all recorded in the register of the Privy Council, under Queensberry's ministry? *Not one word!* Such as are disposed to believe the above anecdote upon the authority of this scurrilous fanatic, who was *not* one of those "condemned for *refusing* the oath of abjuration,"—may do so. We pass on to his "Life of Renwick," which completly confirms our view that, in 1687, the author of "A Hind let Loose" *had not yet founded the institution* of the "Wigtown Martyrs."

Renwick was hanged on the 18th of February 1688. Very soon afterwards Alexander Shields undertook his biography, which, of course, was a later performance than *the Hind.* The characteristics, however, are precisely the same,—virulent abuse of the falling dynasty, and the most unscrupulous calumnies. This performance is arranged under *separate years,* so that there can be no mistake as to what period and what reign his calumnies apply. Now, throughout the whole volume there is *not one word* about the "Wigtown Martyrs." Indeed, execution by *drowning* is only *once* mentioned therein, and that is categorically placed under "*Anno* 1684." Speaking of the temporary protective measure of martial law, so well explained by Sir George Mackenzie, and of the assassins and

outlaws to whom it applied, he says, they were "*murdered* wherever they were met with,—the soldiers being allowed and authorised to kill, shoot, hang, and *drown* them, *pro libitu, without either trial or sentence.*" This calumnious passage manifestly has no application to the Wigtown martyrdom; and that Shields is here only referring to the reign of *Charles* also appears from his subsequent reference to the death of that monarch in the following passage, which affords a good specimen of the mendacious style of the low libeller upon whom the minister of Glasserton is so rash as to rely:—

"While the cruel execution of the Tyrant's mandates were greedily gaping after their game, devouring that poor people whom they had destined to destruction, with open mouth chasing, pursuing them, killing whom they could apprehend, executing others to death that were taken to prisons, &c. In the height of their insolency and heat of their outrage, the holy and true God, who cuts off the spirits of princes, and is terrible to the kings of the earth, did signally verify His word,—that *bloody and deceitful men shall not live out the half of their days*,—in cutting off, by a sudden and *stupendous* death, the *master of malignants*, and prime mover of all these mischiefs, *Charles the Second*, not without suspicion of his being *murdered by his own brother*, the Duke of York, who succeeded to him in the throne, and was proclaimed king at Edinburgh, February 1685."—(*Life of Renwick*, p. 70. *Orig. edit.* printed 1724.)

5. *The Prince of Orange's "Declaration for Scotland,"* 1688. —This unkingly manifesto was "Given at our Court in the Hague the 10th of October, in the year of our Lord, 1688." To the everlasting disgrace of the "Immortal Memory," he stooped to the mean *rôle* of playing *echo* to the conventicle scurrility of which we are constrained to quote so much. He thus describes the Government of Charles II. in Scotland:—"Empowering officers and soldiers to act upon the subjects, *living in quiet and full peace*, the *greatest barbarities*, in destroying them by *hanging, shooting*, and *drowning* them, *without any form of law*, or respect to *age or sex*, not giving some of them time to pray to God for mercy." Now, be it remembered, that there is not found in any record, public or private, a single individual case of any rebel, of *either sex*, executed by *drowning*, either under judicial, martial, or lynch law, nor has ever any one been *named*, by any of these unscrupulous revilers, as having so suffered during the reign of Charles II.

And, as regards the reign of James II., it has never even been pretended that any case of the kind ever occurred therein, other than this fabulous martyrdom at Wigtown! This "Declaration for Scotland" reads like a page out of "A Hind let Loose," or "Faithful Contendings Displayed," the infamous character of which productions has been proclaimed so indignantly by Lord Macaulay. But from what other source did his favourite King William derive those words of abuse in his "Declaration for Scotland,"—calumnies of the very lowest type of that Covenant he hated and scorned,—a paltry retailing of conventicle venom as false as ever outraged the truth of History, or debased the annals and the character of a nation.

"The barefaced lie, launched with resistless force,
Was read by thousands, who believed of course."

And this is the King who, when firmly seated on that throne he was to redeem from cruelty,—from inflicting "the greatest barbarities upon subjects living *in quiet and full peace*,"—sent his mandate to his Privy Council for Scotland,—a peremptory order under his own signature yet preserved in the Register House there,—that the *utmost extremity* of torture should be inflicted upon one Nevil Payne, *suspected* of plotting against his reign! And this, too, is the healing King, who thereafter rejected, and *expressly vetoed*, every suggestion of humane *sanitary* dealing with his mutilated victim, urged upon him even by that subservient Privy Council whom his cruelty had horrified,—and all this in the *second* year of his reign, and in direct contempt of the "Claim of Right"![1]

"Proh scelus! O Soceri raptor nequissime sceptri."

We have thus produced witnesses,—from Renwick of the "Wanderers," crowned under the Covenant, to William of

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[1] See a full account of this horrid affair in Memorials and Letters of Viscount Dundee, vol. ii. pp. 115 to 126; and vol. iii., *Appendix*, No. VII. It is curious to read, in the Register of the *Acta* of *King William's* Privy Council,—"Nevil Pain, who was in *the torture yesterday*, brought to the bar this day, and *again* put to the torture of the *thumbkins*, and of *the boot* upon one leg, *before the thumbkins were taken off*, examined." *Carstairs* should have been there to see. This is dated 11th December 1690,—the very year in which Alexander Shields first founded the institution of the "Wigtown Martyrs." The coincidence is instructive.

Orange, crowned under the meaner ambition of Kings,—that will suffice to prove how *Charles the Second*, and his "evil counsellors," were accused *without a shadow of truth* of the "drowning of women" *per aversionem*,—martyrs unnamed and unknown; and further, that during *this original phase* of the drowning calumny, never a word was said about the two Saints Margaret of Wigtown. We have now to trace the calumny of the *drowning of women* to its original source.

How the falsehood of the "drowning of women" *arose against the Government of Charles II.*

When the outlaws, or "Society People" (an association for promoting murder with safety to the murderers), proclaimed themselves a *belligerent power*, skulking in arms against the State, and erecting within it secret mock Courts of Justice, which meant assassination, various measures were adopted by the Government to meet this alarming condition of the country. The rebellious spirit of a barbarous fanaticism, continually fed from Holland, had been progressing into the worst of anarchy ever since the murder of the Primate in 1679, followed as that was by the insuperable difficulty (mainly caused by women) of bringing the murderers to justice. A rapid succession of other murders, equally savage and cowardly, occurring during the crisis of 1684, towards the close of the reign of Charles II., demanded the most stringent and summary measures to save the country from falling into the hands of these ruffians.

That eminent and honest Whig lawyer and statesman, Sir John Lauder of Fountainhall, manifests no such sympathy for the Scottish *Thugs*, as we find in "History Vindicated." It is not a little instructive to study his *notanda* on the subject, and compare them with the fanatical falsehoods so meanly retailed, against the falling dynasty, by the Prince of "immortal memory,"—falsehoods worthy, indeed, of that other Prince, whose memory is more immortal still. Fountainhall's sentiments on the subject are very plainly indicated,—in favour of the Government towards which he stood in ever consistent political opposition,—throughout his many and minute records of all the remarkable occurrents within the reigns of the two

last Stuarts. We must extract at some length from this valuable repertory, as the best antidote against much in the pages of "History Vindicated" which just resolves into a fanatical attempt to preserve the deformities imposed upon history by *Wodrow*, greatly to the discredit of Scottish character. Our extracts relate to the state of matters which called for the public protection afforded by the *Abjuration Oath*. It must be kept in mind, that, at the period in question, Scotland, as regards the means of preserving internal peace and security, was far more defenceless than Ireland is now, or ever was. No such thing as an organised body of police then existed. Even Colonel Douglas's foot-guards were found useless for the purpose; and had it not been for Colonel Graham of Claverhouse and his three troops of royal dragoons, which he had brought to a high state of discipline, and handled with equal skill, determination, and discretion, Scotland would have been rabbled more desperately by ruffians in 1684-5, than it was by Whigs in 1688, when the Scotch horse were so foolishly ordered to cross the Border.

"On the 12th of August 1684, sundry prisoners are brought in from Kilpatrick, in Galloway, being taken at a conventicle, and refusing to tell where the rebels are harboured; pretending, first, that they are *bound up by an oath*[1] not to discover: *second*, that they will be *harassed*, *oppressed*, and *murdered*, if they do; and that the King's forces are not always at hand *to protect them*. One *Mr James Rynie* [Renwick], a fanatic preacher, *come lately from Holland*, is now the ringleader of these foolish people."—(*Decisions.*)

The same diligent and faithful chronicler afterwards records the immediate result of this insane agitator's arrival from Holland.

"On the 8th of November 1684 was the Presbyterian *Declaration* (so called) affixed on sundry market-crosses and kirk-doors by the *Whigs* in the western shires, *threatening* that if the *curates* and *soldiers*, &c., would not give over the persecuting and searching of them, but brought them still to public deaths, they would not spare to shed *their* blood by *their own measure*, seeing they could not do it now in a *legal judicative* way; and they disowned Charles Stuart to be their King. And in prosecution of this

[1] This is corroborated by Claverhouse, in a letter quoted *supra*, p. li. The oath forced upon these poor people would probably be excepted by the minister of Glasserton, from that strange *homily on oaths*, at page 5 of "History Vindicated."

some of those *ruffians* fell in, at Swyne Abbey, beside Blackburn in West Lothian, and *murdered* Thomas Kennoway and Duncan Stewart, two of the King's life-guard, *in a most barbarous manner*. Some thought that *Whig* Declaration was but a *State invention*, set on foot by the *soldiers* to make that party odious and themselves necessary; but this *convinced every one* of the *reality* of this declared war."—"*This was to execute what they had threatened in their Declaration of war.*"—(*Hist. Obs. and Decis.*)

These soldiers were murdered at night in their beds. The curates caught it next. The crimes of the curate of Carsphairn, in Galloway, were, his being a placed minister of exemplary character, and an intrepid preacher against rebellion and murder.

"12*th December* 1684.—News came to the Privy Council that the *wild fanatics* had fallen upon one Peirson, minister at Carsphairn in Galloway, a great delater of them in his sermons, and killed him. They ridiculously keep *mock courts of justice*, and *cite* any they judge their inveterate enemies to them, and lead probation, and condemn them, and thereafter *murder them*. And thus they proceeded against Nory, minister of Dunfermline, but he kept himself out of their way."—(*Decisions.*)

From the same contemporary source we learn how it fared with the military in their attempt to put this down. The admirable management of Claverhouse had previously succeeded in keeping down the rebellion in the south and west, at the time when he was appointed Sheriff-depute of Dumfriesshire. And this most difficult task he had accomplished "without blood and without severity or extortion," as he himself reported to the Secret Committee of the Privy Council.[1] He declared at that time that he had left all settled in Galloway, and the parish ministers "in safety." But the murder of the minister

[1] Claverhouse was called to report to the Committee of Council his transactions in the southern and western shires, in 1682, which he did at great length, and received the thanks of the Privy Council on the 15th of May in that year. *Inter alia*, he thus reported:—

"And it may now be safely said, that Galloway is not only as *peaceable*, but as *regular* as any part of the country on this side Tay; and the rebels are *reduced without blood;* and the country brought to obedience, and conformity to the church-government, *without severity or extortion;* few heritors being fined, and that but gently; and *under that* none is or are to be fined but two or three in a parish; and the authority of the church is restored in that country; *and the ministers in safety.*"—(Memorials and Letters of Dundee, ii. 279).

of Carsphairn told another tale, and Claverhouse was sent to wield the sword.

"20*th December* 1684.—Letters came from Colonel Graham of Claverhouse, then in Galloway, that he had met with a party of these rogues, who had skulked in the mountains—if their retiring holes could be got, they are so cowardly, they may be easily routed—he had followed them, killed five, and taken three prisoners, some of which were of the murderers of the minister of Carsphairn; and that he was to judge and execute the three prisoners by his justiciary power; and if his garrisons were once placed, he hoped to secure and quiet the country."—(*Decisions.*)

This was not so easily done, however, while Renwick remained at large; and Queensberry, who, in the interest of his brother, Colonel Douglas, had become jealous of Claverhouse, committed the great mistake of superseding (for a short period) his only good captain, and by far the ablest councillor of all who served the King both in the cabinet and in the field.

"*January* 1685.—The few handful of *fanatic rebels* left in the west turning *very insolent*, the High Treasurer—*to put a rub on Claverhouse*, who had been lately there in December last, and could not wholly suppress them—causes his brother, Colonel James Douglas, select out of his whole regiment (of foot-guards) two hundred of his prettiest men, and by order of the Council sends them against these rogues, that the glory of defeating them might fall to his share. And accordingly, Douglas being one day in the fields of Galloway with a small party of eight or ten, he meets with as many of the rebels at a house, who *kill two of his men and Captain Urquhart*, Meldrum's brother, and had very nearly *shot Douglas himself dead*, had not the Whig's carabine misgiven, whereupon Douglas pistolled him presently. Urquhart is the only staff officer this *desperate crew* have yet had the honour to kill. He was brought into Edinburgh and buried with much respect. They came a company of them to Kirkcudbright, and *killed two men;* and caused a minister, called Mr Shaw, to *swear* he should never preach again in Scotland."—(*Historical Observes.*)

Doubtless this misadventure would prevent either Colonel Douglas or Queensberry from *crowing* over Claverhouse about the like mishap at *Drumclog*, and from instituting odious comparisons in favour of the king's foot-guards over the king's horse-guards. All this, and much more, was the direct result of the advent of that "wild fanatic" from Holland, and his truculent proclamations. When the murder of the curate was reported to the King and the Duke in London, the latter, in a letter to

Queensberry, dated 22d December 1684, expressed himself in the following natural, and certainly not over-excited terms:—

"I have, last week, yours of the 13th, but not in time to answer it by the last Saturday post, by which I find that some of the fugitive rebels had murdered a minister in Galloway; by which one sees that those desperate villains will lose no opportunity of doing what mischief they can, and would spare nobody, and do more were it in their power; and I am sure you of the Secret Committee will continue their care and vigilance to secure the Government from such bloody-principled villains."—(*Queensberry Papers. Memorials of Dundee*, vol. i., p. 115.)

Other desperate murders and outrages against law and order were committed about the same time by this "army of God," who ever since the assassination of the Primate practically wrote the sixth commandment thus,—*Thou shalt do murder*, and say it is *the Lord's* doing!

All these facts must be kept constantly in mind in order justly to appreciate the difficulties of the Government, and the remarkable forbearance and discrimination exercised by the Privy Council and the Courts of Justiciary, the latter of which were continually bullied, *coram publico*, by the rebels brought before them, of whom some of the more frantic would neither accept grace for themselves, nor suffer their less obstinate comrades to do so. We must quote one more of the many instances recorded by Fountainhall, illustrative of these sad times:—

"*December* 1684.—At Criminal Court, *ten* of these *wild west-country fanatics* are pannelled for adhering to the late proclamation against his Majesty, and for disowning his authority. *Six* of them were so wise as to resile; the others were *so mad* as to deny to say, God save the King. *Three* would have done it, but, by the *pestilent society of the fourth*, were *objured* [*obdurate*]; so all the four were sentenced, and hanged that same day in the Gallowlee, between four and five o'clock in the afternoon."—(*Decis.*)

Now, according to the minister of Glasserton's own showing, here was a Christian after his own heart; and, indeed, the only perfect Christian among the whole batch of these Renwick ruffians. For our reverend opponent, in a glowing page of his Vindication (p. 5) where of course he *assumes*, as facts unquestionable, all the nonsensical details of the Penninghame romance, falls into ecstacies over the beauty of holiness exhibited by his celebrated countrywomen when they refused life as the price of abjuring complicity in murder. The italics

in the following passage are his own:—"Even after they had tasted the bitterness of death, they refused life, purchased by doing what they believed to be sin. *They would rather die than sin against God.* That was their religion, and for that they suffered." Our Vindicator of History adds, with an innocence almost infantine,—"Was not that true religion,—and were they not sufferers for the truth—martyrs in the proper sense of the term?" But, alack, this tragedy sinks into comedy—the sacred homily is lost in profane hilarity —*solventur risu tabulæ*—when the truth is disclosed that these mere mortals *petitioned* to be *allowed* to "sin against God," and were *pardoned* accordingly! To discover the Christian, *par excellence*, whom he has so eloquently figured, the worthy minister of Glasserton must turn to those *Gallowlee* martyrs; and surely the *three* men who were rebuked into martyrdom by the pure Christianity of that *one*, must carry their crowns with a difference, and bear the bend sinister upon their armour of faith, at the great account.

The fact is, however, that our reverend opponent, whom no one would dream of identifying, in disposition for evil, with the so-called "Worthies" of the Revolution of the Church in Scotland, nevertheless wields arguments, and indulges in calumnies, which such murderous men as Renwick and Shields would have applauded to the bent. In the following passages of "History Vindicated," he takes it upon him to sneer at the Government of Charles II. for *affecting* alarm, and has the folly to tell us that it was merely "a *pretext* for greater severities." Need there be any other answer to what follows than the passages we have already extracted from Fountainhall?

"Renwick's proclamation affixed to sundry market-crosses and kirk-doors on the 8th November 1684, the murder of the minister of Carsphairn, and of two soldiers of the life-guard, gave the Government a *pretext for greater severities.* But who that has marked the policy and proceedings of the Government for the twenty years previous can be surprised at the '*treason*' of Renwick, whatever may be thought of his *principles?* Or who can wonder that *one clergyman should be murdered* out of all the numbers who were employed as *Government spies and informers*, to hand men over to such tribunals as the *Justiciary Courts;* or that *two soldiers should perish* under the lawless vengeance of those whom long suffering and ever increasing severities had driven to madness. It is *probable enough* that Renwick's declaration led to some cases of

violence; but what led to the Declaration? It came out just after the severities at the *Justiciary Courts*, and the giving in of the curates' lists. These produced the Declaration, and *should bear the blame of it.*"—(*Hist. Vind.* p. 15.)

Nay, reverend Sir, no one will be at all surprised at the *treason* of Renwick who has ever bestowed a moment's consideration upon his *principles.* You are not happy in that antithesis. Moreover, the oath prescribed was not merely against "making war," but against *committing murder.* And we must confess our unfeigned surprise that one clergyman should become the apologist of the *murder of another*, and upon no better grounds than a vulgar calumny. The arguments and reasoning of the minister of Glasserton will gain him great applause in Ireland, if they happen to reach so far. The government that dares to hunt murderers to their sanctuary, and to put down armed rebellion with arms, "should," says our reverend opponent, "bear the blame" both of the murders and of the rebellion. Had justiciaries not been suffered to condemn, had murderers and assassins not been molested, had parish ministers not been protected, had armed rebels been allowed to work their will, Renwick would not have proclaimed war, or prompted murder. Bishops and councillors, soldiers and curates, would neither have been massacred on the highway, nor murdered in their beds. Therefore, they all *deserved* what they met with, and the *perpetrators* are the oppressed! Such is the logic of "History Vindicated." The voice is the voice of Glasserton; but the *sentiment* and the *reasoning* are both *Tipperary.*[1]

No measure ever devised for the immediate safety of a king-

[1] "The Government *affected* to be cast into great alarm by the 'Apologetical Declaration;' and, though it was the manifesto of a small and by no means formidable body, thought it necessary to frame an oath abjuring it (the oath of abjuration), to be tendered to all who, holding Presbyterian principles, were suspected of disloyalty. The gallant cavaliers, whom some in the nineteenth century extol as heroes, could no longer fight the King's battles against the peasantry of Scotland, unless *protected by an oath* (to be tendered to high and low, rich and poor, male and female, even to old women and maidens), binding one and all to *not make war* against those who serve the King 'in church, state, army, or country.'"—(*Hist. Vind.*, p. 16.)

dom in imminent peril, both from within and without, stands more completely justified from the imputation of wanton oppression than does the *Abjuration Oath of* 1684. Not one in a hundred who read the history of the latter days of the Stuarts, perverted and poisoned in every direction as that history has been, and mainly owing to Wodrow's undetected calumnies, has ever taken the trouble to trace the causes and working of that measure, or even distinctly to understand what the oath of abjuration means. We have sketched the history of it in a previous page (clxxii), but shall here quote a portion of the royal proclamation, that the impartial reader may judge upon what principle of truth, justice, or honour, the Prince of Orange can be justified in accusing Charles II. and his government of "empowering officers and soldiers to act, upon the subjects *living in quiet and full peace, the greatest barbarities.*" Upon the 30th of December 1685 the lamentable truth was thus proclaimed:—

"Since these rebels, after *declaring* their hellish intentions, for the better performance of their mischievous designs do lurk in secret, and are never decerned but in the *acts* of their horrid assassinations, and, passing up and down, *unknown*, amongst our loyal subjects, take opportunity to *murder and assassinate*, and it being necessary to provide a remedy against so imminent a danger, which cannot be so well done as when the good are differenced from the bad by *discriminating signs*,—at least constant inquiries may occasion a continual trouble even to our good subjects,—*Therefore*, as a remedy for such inconveniences, we declare it to be our royal will and pleasure, and we hereby command and require *all our subjects*, within our ancient kingdom, *both men and women, past the age of sixteen years*, not to presume to travel without testificate of their loyalty and good principles, which they are to have in manner following," &c.

The proclamation then proceeds to declare the machinery provided for carrying out this comprehensive measure of public safety. The first principle of it was, that none should be exempt from its operation, high or low, rich or poor, male or female. In all the disaffected districts throughout Scotland, or districts domineered over by armed rebels, royal commissioners, armed with justiciary powers, were appointed, and all the well affected and most influential noblemen and landed gentry were named members of the same, in their respective

shires. Any three of these commissioners sitting together, and the Sheriffs of such shires as were not so commissioned, and every privy councillor, were declared in the proclamation to be the authorities competent to administer the oath of abjuration, and to grant the requisite certificate that the oath had been taken. The oath itself, originally framed in broader terms, was *reduced to the most simple form*, in order to preclude all rational pretext of its running counter to the conscience of any Christian whatever.

"I, *A B*, do hereby abhor, renounce, and disown, in presence of the Almighty God, the pretended *Declaration of War*, lately affixed at several parish churches, *in so far as* it declares a war against his sacred Majesty, and asserts that it is *lawful to kill* such as serve his Majesty in Church, State, Army, or Country."

The proclamation then proceeds farther to direct and declare, in the following terms:—

"And such as can subscribe are to subscribe the same upon a large sheet of paper, for every parish; and on performance thereof, the said Commissioners are hereby *ordained to deliver to every such person* a testificate of the tenor following:—

"'We, *A B*, &c., do by these testify and declare, that *C*, in the parish of *D*, did compear before us, and on his, *or her*, solemn oath, before Almighty God, did *abjure and renounce* the late traitorous *Apologetic Declaration*, in so far as it *declares war* against his sacred Majesty, and asserts that it is *lawful to kill* such as serve his Majesty in Church, State, Army, or Country.'

"Which testificate we declare is to serve for a *free pass*, to all who have the same, *for all time thereafter*, and shall preserve them *from all molestation and trouble*, in going about their affairs," &c.

There follows a provision to meet the contingency of this protection being lost or destroyed, and precise directions are given for remedying the accident.

Whether this very complicated and comprehensive mode of detection, and protection, was the best executive policy that could then have been devised to meet the exigencies of the case, does not fall within the purview of the present controversy. It will occur to many, however, that our own difficulties with Ireland in the present day ought to teach us a lesson of humility, and restrain us from a hasty condemnation of the policy of a Government which, two centuries ago, and on the very eve of a foreign invasion aided from within, had to con-

tend with difficulties infinitely greater, and more alarming. On perusing the Government "Instructions," issued 30th December 1684, to the royal Commissioners of Justiciary appointed in the disturbed districts when the abjuration oath came to be enforced, every intelligent and impartial mind must perceive that they were dictated by the very reverse of an oppressive or vindictive spirit on the part of the Privy Council.

The *first* instruction directs the Commissioners as to their general procedure. The *second* instruction lays down the procedure against such as *refuse* to "disown those horrid principles," including that special order as regards women, so often referred to.

"2*do*. If any person *own* the principles (of Renwick's proclamation), or do not *disown* them, they must be judged *at least by three*. And you must immediately give them *a libel*, and the *names of the inquest*, and *witnesses;* and they, *being found guilty*, are to be hanged immediately in the place, *according to law*. But at this time you are *not to examine any women* but such as have been *active* in the said courses in a *signal manner*, and those are to be *drowned*."

The *third* instruction relates to the absent; and then there follows an instruction which breathes the same spirit of strict but even-handed justice.

"4*to*. You must proceed against all who are guilty of having been at Bothwell Bridge, or were in accession thereunto, except they have *taken the indemnity*. But you are not to proceed so, *summarly*, but *give them time;* and if they take the *test*, and be *very penitent*, let them find caution, or *enact themselves*, to appear when called."

Now, we venture to maintain, not only that these instructions (which may be taken as a fair type of the spirit of all their instructions to Justiciary Commissioners), are framed in a spirit of mingled firmness and moderation, for which this sorely tried Government deserves every credit, but that all that abuse about the *drowning of women*, framed for Holland, and poured out by field-preachers, and the "Society People" in conventicles, *expressly against Charles* II. and his Government in Scotland, has no other foundation than the *mere word* "drowned," as used in that instruction relating to female convicts. Not until 1690 did it assume the specific form of the *Wigtown Martyrs*, as charged against the Government of James II.

That this was a *cruel order to drown women* is a puerile perversion. The idea is quite unworthy of any intelligent reader of history. It was simply to the effect that women should not be hanged, drawn, and quartered, in the exceptional cases of their conviction. And the idea is no less silly, that to have brought women at all under that penalty argues a cruel Government. To have exempted women, or youth above puberty, from this law of *abjuration*, would have been to neutralize it. But there is no plea more foolishly fanatical, no mistake more puerile, than that the Government, even in those times so sadly out of joint, were ever *wantonly cruel*, or *cruelly disposed*, towards female rebels. Every allowance was made for their sex that was at all consistent with the law of the land, and safety to the State. And yet, ever since the murder of the Primate, indeed before it, and in direct furtherance of that execrable crime, women had proved themselves the most determined and dangerous of fanatics, becoming absolutely unsexed when excited on the subject, and seducing or compelling their children, or younger brothers and sisters, to follow the same rebellious courses. Relying much, and not without reason, on the indemnity and privileges accorded to the sex, they were the most incorrigible harbourers and encouragers of villains plotting murder. They were the most devoted resetters of assassins fleeing from justice. They were the readiest to incur danger, and the boldest and most obstinate in facing retribution. And whatever happened to them, even when the alarm was greatest, and the danger most imminent? Fanatical historians, and martyr-fanciers, speak as if there had been a massacre of these innocents. Two rabid conventicle termagants were hanged together in 1681, "for most heinous crimes,"—says the excellent and ever humanely inclined Lord Advocate,—"which no sex should defend;" and even these were capitally dealt with only because they violently and blasphemously refused to be saved! Just three other female rebels (including the Wigtown women) were condemned to death throughout the whole reigns of the Restoration, and they were *all pardoned!* And so ends the cruel tale of the drowning of women, "some of them of a very young, some of an old age,"—*not one instance of the kind having ever occurred!*

THE SECOND EDITION OF "HISTORY VINDICATED."

While this RECAPITULATION was passing lazily through the press, we were caught napping over our review of the *first* edition of "History Vindicated," by the unexpected compliment of a copy of the *second* edition, wherein we find ourselves honoured with the following observation, enlivened by a merry chuckle in the relative note:—

"In his preface (*to the Case for the Crown*), having taken credit to himself for other good services done to the cause of Scottish history, Mr Napier says,—'I now sit down before this last stronghold of the Wodrow Martyrology, and hope to leave it also in ruins.'

Note.—"The first edition of History Vindicated was published in July 1867. Immediately thereafter, Mr Napier advertised a new edition of his *Case*, which has not appeared up to this date (February 1869). *Is he still sitting before the stronghold? or has he raised the siege?*"

No, the siege is not raised, reverend and facetious Vindicator. But as Wodrow's stronghold had taken the shape of "History Vindicated"—as Castle Dangerous had become Castle Dry—truth to tell I was *sleeping* before it. Best let sleeping dogs lie. The fact is, that the author of the Case is one of those procrastinating mortals who do not always ride when they put on their spurs, or fire when they have loaded their gun. Mine was loaded nearly to the muzzle before your second shot reached me, and I have not fired it off yet (December 1869). But to drop the metaphor, flattered by this impatience, and encouraged by your involuntary imitation of my style, without raising the siege, I rise to explain.

The "Case for the Crown" was written to meet an angry and contemptuous challenge sounded from the Academic Chair of St Andrews. I thought that my labours in this cause were thereby concluded. But the advent of another assailant, under cover of "History Vindicated," ushered, too, with an alarming *tantara tantara* of wind-instruments, by your herald and armour-bearer in the *Scotsman*, — caused me to withdraw meanwhile from circulation what remained of the impression of my "Case for the Crown." The object in doing so merely was to revise the whole subject,—which is in fact *Wodrow on his*

trial,—and to review all the reviewers worthy of being reviewed, who had honoured with their philippics *Memorials of Dundee*, and the relative *Case for the Crown*.

This my own *second* task was nearly completed, when I received the second edition of "History Vindicated." I laid it aside, however, without perusing even a single paragraph, until the whole of this "Recapitulation" had gone to press, with a trifling exception. Now, and not till now, reverend Sir, I have given your new volume a diligent perusal. It appears to me to be in every respect worthy of that side of the question in hand which you have so warmly espoused. But so little do I find therein, either of new facts, proof, or argument of any importance, that, I do not hesitate to affirm, the whole of it is already answered, and answered, I fear, *ad nauseam*, in the *Case for the Crown* and the foregoing *Recapitulation*. A short concluding review will suffice in reply.

The Minister of Glasserton gives us a stone for bread.

Is it, reverend Sir, by way of puttting your best foot foremost, that when we ask you for that proof which is the *bread* of History, you give us, as your frontispiece, this *old stone?* Shades of the sainted Margarets! If that terrible sacrifice, of two innocent and heavenward females, were indeed a God's-truth, was there not, in all Scotland, and in the very triumph of our "glorious Revolution," a single Whig enthusiast, possessing the intelligence of an educated gentleman as well as the devotion of a primitive Christian, to write their epitaph? Was *theirs* a story to be told, over graves so sacred, by some nameless scrawling mendicant, in language which desecrates the "beautiful old story," which debases Christianity, and causes Faith herself to turn from the record with disgust? And can you, reverend Sir, explain how it happens, that among the many and varied repetitions of the story of their martyrdom, never a word is said about the *gathering of their precious remains* after their souls had taken flight? You pretend to point out to us *now* their actual graves. But not a pamphlet, not a kirk-session minute,—all so rich in the details of their last mortal struggles,—speaks of their *interment*, or

when or where that took place. But for these miserable epitaphs, bearing the unmistakable signs of falsehood and fatuity on the very face of them, the legend of the Wigtown martyrs might seem to mean, that they were at once translated, body and soul, from the scene of their suffering to the glory of their reward.

Surely it cannot be doubted that after this unintelligible martyrdom had been accomplished, after Winram and the waves had done their work and retired, the recovery of the bodies of their innocent victims from the quicksands of the Solway, the terrible scene of redeeming them from the crabs, to be deposited in coffins, followed by the heart-rending ceremony of consigning them to their rest in the kirk-yard of Wigtown—for if buried there it must have been done at the time—could not fail to be as exciting, and attended by no less a multitude of groaning spectators and weeping "relations,"[1] than the cruel sacrifice itself. The whole frightful affair, of this *summary execution by soldiers*, as it is called, must have occupied a long day. If the light of day ever looked down upon such a scene in Scotland, it was then for the first and the last time. Is it not passing strange, the covenanting silence as to the obsequies of these devoted Christian martyrs? If it be conceivable, that it was the interest or the inclination of the Lord Advocate, and Fontainhall, to preserve the dead silence, as to the whole story, which they have done, surely it would be no less the interest and the inclination of the Covenanters to omit nothing that was essential to a complete narrative of this unaccountable immolation. How long did it last? How and by whom were the bodies recovered? How, when, and where were they interred? The utter silence as to all this, and many other questions that suggest themselves, is so completely out of nature, under all the circumstances otherwise so minutely described, as to be inexplicable upon any theory of the truth of the great *melodrame* of the Solway. It seems as essential to their story, that we should have been enabled

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[1] "*Her relations* thought to save her when she had said so much; but on Winram putting to her the oath of abjuration, she once more refused," &c.—(*Principal Tulloch's Wigtown Martyrs.*)

to follow these female champions of the Cross to their glorified graves, as is the grand transformation scene to a Christmas pantomime, when the fairies bid the children good night. But here, after a frightful amount of murderous ducking, managed God knows how, as the last gasp and gurgle of the "virgin martyr of eighteen" is horrifying the audience, the curtain falls,—and *exeunt omnes!* This may suit the object of a sensational drama; but we are here by way of dealing with a tragedy in real life, every circumstance of which is said to have been witnessed by hundreds if not thousands of *eye-witnesses*, and that from those eye-witnesses are derived the harrowing particulars so far handed down to us. But they had a great deal more, and of the deepest interest, to tell,—why did they not tell it? Even fictitious tragedy, when it desires to look like truth, rarely ends so abruptly as this. The chronicler of the cruelties of Lovelace lets us hear the jar of Clarissa's coffin on the stair, and Shakespeare shews us the grave of Ophelia on the stage. But this Vindicator of History, with all his powers of research, personal and vicarious, has been unable to discover a single notice of the obsequies of these thrice blessed Margarets. He has not a surmise on the subject. Yet no historian ever proved himself more accomplished in *guessing*. Indeed this treatise of his might well have been entitled,—History Vindicated by means of Guessing. And yet, when the natural craving of our over-taxed sympathies looks to him for the solace of the last soothing scene of this young Christian martyr's release, (for old Meg seems to have been of as little account with them as the stake to which she was tied), he can do no more than offer us this barbarous stone, whose miserable inscription, forged half a century after the event, even the soul of a sexton might despise.

But although all this be inexplicable on the assumption of the truth of the Wigtown martyrdom, it is quite consistent with its falsehood, as the Principal of St Andrews himself teaches us to see. He tells us that the Penninghame kirk-session, who are answerable for every syllable of the fullest and most absurd narration of this martyrdom that has been fabricated, (except the mad pedler's), were composed of "grave and respected

men, who would have shrunk from a falsehood with abhorrence." But then he adds, "they were imbued with the *imaginative* fertility of the consciousness of the time"; and that hence it happened that their "*covenanting imagination* pictured, in lively and affecting colours, *beyond the reality, the martyr* scene." Now, without attempting to fathom the academic philosophy of what seems to common sense a violent contradiction, but which, for all we know, may be the "Secret of Hegel," the conclusion we come to is this: So completely had these grave and respected men exhausted the fertility of the consciousness of the time, and the covenanting imagination beyond the reality, of the *martyr* scene, that their sensitively truthful nature had not a lie left wherewith to "embellish" the *obsequies.*

On the other hand, that no one can tell what became of these women,—that their actual graves are as mythical as their martyrdom,—tallies perfectly with the fact that they were neither martyred nor murdered. Having submitted to the oath of abjuration at head-quarters, obtained their pardon from Government in terms of their own petitions, and been dismissed by the Privy Council with the protecting certificate, or "pass," as having "abjured" in terms of law, that their subsequent life, death, and burial should have become altogether lost sight of, is a state of matters naturally, if not inevitably, incident to the obscurity of their condition, and the absolute insignificance to history and record of their ultimate fate. Such, in those days, was the common lot of thousands, who, saving some penal notice of them in the records of the rebellion, have left no more trace of their existence than the bubbles on the ocean.

The Minister of Glasserton's "Monumental Evidence."

But we must not forget the minister of Glasserton's old stone. His hallucination on the subject is most remarkable. Notwithstanding that his own anxious investigations have compelled him to a conclusion which proves this item of his evidence to be worthless, he has made it the *alpha* and *omega*

of his new edition. Good wine, it is said, needs no bush; but the sign which now decorates the porch of "History Vindicated" is so very repulsive that it may be apt to send the reader to be *refreshed* at the rival sign of the Crown over the way. Nevertheless, the concluding branch of his proof, occupying the last pages of his new volume, is as imposingly arranged under the lofty title, "*Monumental Evidence*," as if he were vindicating History through the Pyramids. And what is it? Neither more nor less than this ugly old stone again! Let us, then, test its value.

The Principal of St Andrews peremptorily assigns the date 1714 to the epitaph on *Margaret Wilson*, because he assumes it to have been published in the first edition of the "Cloud of Witnesses." When exhausting, as we have done, this "monumental evidence" in our "Case for the Crown," (pp. 134-139), having only seen an imperfect copy of the first edition of the *Cloud*, which appeared in 1714, we readily yielded to the Principal's dogmatism in assigning that date to the inscription in question. What mattered it? The date 1714 made no difference to our argument of the worthlessness of the evidence. An epitaph of the most illiterate and ignorant character, graven by the rudest of hands upon an old stone in the most *covenanting* kirk-yard in Scotland, of a date not older than twenty-nine years after the event it pretends to record, and bearing on the face of it unmistakable signs of its parentage in the Penninghame fabrication of 1711, first appearing, moreover, in an appendix to a desultory, unvouched collection of fanatical "testimonies," of a character so virulent, mean, and inauthentic that even Wodrow condemns its principles, and repudiates its authority,[1] and, finally, offered to the public by the anonymous fanatical editor with a suggestive apology,—(relative to his appendix of "*Epitaphs* and *Inscriptions* upon the tombs or grave-stones of the *martyrs* in several church-yards and other places where they lie buried"),

[1] It is amusing to read the severe handling the *Cloud of Witnesses* receives from Wodrow, whose own more voluminous calumnies are not a bit less vicious, or better vouched, than the anonymous collection he so severely condemns. It was a quarrel among rogues. See his History, p. 145, *fol. edit.*

namely,—"The reader is desired to remember that they *being mostly composed by illiterate country-people* one cannot reasonably expect neatness and elegant poetry in them,"—all this considered, we say,—the date 1714, so dogmatically assigned by the Principal of St Andrews to that old stone, is of no more weight or value to prove this martyrdom than the slime which the docken-snail drags across its surface.

But the minister of Glasserton himself has settled the question, both against the Principal and his own predilections, and candidly gives us the fact. Pursuing researches to support the Principal, he has arrived, *multum gemens*, at the opposite conclusion, which we shall give in his own words:—

"Mr Napier says,—'We assume that the epitaph to Margaret Wilson, which appears in the later editions of the *Cloud of Witnesses*, was also published in the original edition of 1714. But we have been able to discover only two copies of that edition, and in both of them the appendix of epitaphs happens to be imperfect.' We, too, have seen *several copies* of the first edition of this work, but none of them contains the inscription. At first we thought them imperfect, but we now *doubt this*, and are inclined to think that *the first edition did not contain the Wigtown inscription*. . . . . We have not been able to obtain a sight of the *second* edition of the *Cloud of Witnesses*, but we have been told that the inscription *does not appear in it*. So far as at present known, it *appeared in print for the first time in the third edition, published in* 1730."—(*Hist. Vind.* pp. 102, 103, 2d *edit.*)

This, then, in 1730, is *the first notice discovered* of these pseudo-martyrs, or either of them, having been buried in Wigtown kirk-yard, and that is very nearly *half a century* after their alleged martyrdom at Wigtown. Most assuredly, had any "monumental evidence" of the death of these martyrs existed in the kirk-yard of Wigtown of the dates of the *first* and *second* editions of such a work as the "Cloud of Witnesses," its fanatical collector and editor would never have postponed the publication of it until his *third* edition in 1730. And as for,—

"Let earth and stone still witness beare,
Their lyes a virgine martyre here,"—

we are strongly inclined to the belief that what "lies here" is the old stone, and not the martyr.

The solution is not difficult. How such "monumental evidence" was got up in those days, witness Sir Walter Scott's

couleur de rose account of the wandering stone-mason, Robert Paterson, immortalised under the name of "Old Mortality." He was not the first of his messan-breed. Sir Walter's genius turned to gold whatever dross he touched. But these mendicant tamperers with the old grave-stones in the kirk-yards of westland Whiggery are the lowest type of the fanatical sect who with "reckless intrepidity scattered around them the most atrocious calumnies." How such memorials are got up still, witness *Wigtown* and *Stirling*. Higher and higher rises that "*Monumental Evidence*," as lower and lower sinks the vile calumny they serve.[1]

The Minister of Glasserton's recent discovery of a new light cast upon the mode of executing the Wigtown Martyrs.

It will require a *third* edition of "History Vindicated" before the world outside the Covenant can be made to understand *why* these women were martyred. But our reverend opponent has, it seems, at last discovered *how* they were martyred. His second edition thus refers to the fact:—

"The only other pamphlet (new in this controversy) which has turned

[1] The minister of Glasserton, somewhat inconsistently, (*Hist. Vind.* p. 102, *note*), *declines* the testimony of *old* St Margaret's tomb-stone, because it is not noticed in the *Cloud of Witnesses;* while at the same time he both admits and *proves* that the inscription upon it was engraved by the same hand, and "of the same date." It was wise in him, however, not to give us either a photograph or a transcript. If our indulgent readers will turn to page 138 of the "Case for the Crown," they will there find it. This old stone would seem to have shifted its place in the kirk-yard, for some fanatical writers describe it as being "placed in the wall of the church," while others, namely, Sir Andrew Agnew and the minister of Glasserton, as "standing erect" in the kirk-yard, and as "being a small erect stone." It is of greater importance to observe that upon this old stone had been graven the commonplace obituary warning, in this illiterate form, "*Me Mento Mori*," prior to, and manifestly without any reference to, the *martyrological* inscription subsequently superinduced. For it is obvious to the eye that the *memento mori* previously graven on the stone, and quite insignificant of such a martyrdom, had interfered with and interrupted the continuous sculpturing of the martyrological narrative in the middle of a sentence. Old Mortality was not particular.

up, is *Popery Reviving, &c.*, printed in Edinburgh 1714, *valuable* chiefly from its *casting light* on the mode of the execution. But as an extract has been given from it in the previous chapter to illustrate that point, it need not again be quoted."—(*Hist. Vind.*, p. 74, 2*d edit.*)

What! after all Wodrow's infallible teaching—*coached* by Penninghame, and *vindicated* by Glasserton—have we yet to learn "the mode of execution"? The following is the only portion of the pamphlet in question which the minister of Glasserton has seen fit to extract:—

"The writer of this pamphlet, entitled *Popery Reviving*,[1] published in Edinburgh in 1714, gives the usual account of the two women, and of their trial and sentence,[2] and then goes on to describe the manner of their death:—

"'Sometime after the sentence was thus executed: Two stups of timber were fastened upon the brink of the water of Blednoch (to which place the sea flows always at high water), and the prisoners are brought under the guard of a *troop of dragoons*, commanded by Major Winram, to the place of execution; and after being *allowed some time to perform their last duties of devotion*, which they did with so much Christian calmness and sweet submission to the pleasure of Almighty God, and such lively dependence upon Him for salvation through Christ, that their behaviour *extorted tears from some of the soldiers that guarded them*,[3]—the manner of their execution was: Cords were tied to the foresaid stups, and to their bodies, and they *thrown over the brink of the river into the water*, and drowned. There is one thing finally to be taken notice of,

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[1] But this is not the whole title of the tract, and as the title is material to a just appreciation of its value, we give it here *in extenso*:—

"Popery Reviving, or an account of the growth of Popery, and the *insolence of Papists* and *Jacobites* in Scotland, in a letter from a gentleman in Edinburgh to his friend in the country, with a Postscript, giving a short relation of the *Popish massacres* in France, Ireland, &c.; and of the *Spanish Armada*, *Gunpowder Plot*, and other wicked designs to *enslave* Britain and Ireland:

"Edinburgh, printed by John Mossman, 1714. Price 5 pence."

The letter is neither signed nor addressed, but simply dated "*December* 1713."

[2] The pamphlet does not give the sentence, neither does it give any account of the trial, but admits that it proceeded with *an assize*. It gives the usual fanatical and apocryphal account of these women.

[3] This fanatical falsehood is analogous to the still grosser one committed by Wodrow in his account of the military execution of *John Brown*, whom, he says, Claverhouse shot with his *own pistol*, because *his dragoons refused to execute the cruel order!* He had *three troops* with him at the time.

that the old woman was first despatched, in order to terrify the young woman to a compliance with such demands and oaths as were required of her; but the view of her fellow-sufferer's death did not in the least shake her steadfastness in her resolution to adhere to her principles to the very last.'"—(*Hist. Vind.* p. 45, 2d *edit.*)

Here the reverend Vindicator of History closes his extract. Nor does he vouchsafe any further information on the subject of his "valuable" discovery. We find, however, upon hunting it out for ourselves, that the story does not stop here. It is continued in that strain of manifest fabrication which the Principal of St Andrews has so curiously characterised, and *excused*, as "a *natural* imaginative process beyond the reality."

"After her being *thrown* into the water, *a person*, deeply affected with such a melancholy spectacle, *pulled her up*, and expressed these words unto her,—'Dear Margaret, say, GOD *save the King*.' To which she replied,—'GOD save him if it be His will, for his salvation is what I desire': Upon which the sorrowful *multitude* of doolfull beholders cried out to Winram, the commanding officer,—'Sir, she has said it,'—to which he answered,—'Tender the oath to her': And it being demanded if she would take the oath, she answered,—'No, no; no sinful oath': Upon which she was again thrust down under the water. Thus died two innocent women, by a *publick sentence*, whose lives no law (even the severest then standing) could have reached without a manifest streach. The truth of this fact, with many other aggravating circumstances than what I have condescended upon, *can be* proven by a hundred living witnesses."

But this anonymous pamphleteer, like all the other fanatical retailers of the ridiculous calumny, *proves* nothing, and does not pretend to be one of the hundred nameless living witnesses, who, he says, *can* do so,—the usual boast of the baseless falsehood. The new production in question is one of those Cameronian tracts which flooded the first quarter of the 18th century, not long before the publication of Wodrow's History,—itself just a monster tract of the time, written in the same virulent and mendacious spirit, and under the same *delirium tremens* of covenanting alarm at the then prevalence, and increasing preponderance, of Episcopalian predilections in Scotland. The bulk of the minor tracts, cast into shade by Wodrow's *ursa major*, have been long lost sight of. They only come under the notice of such as have occasionally been led to exhume them from the dark dens of the Advocates Library,

or the curious closets of Dr David Laing. We may safely say, however, that not one of the many readers of this second edition of History Vindicated,—for, has it not been sown broadcast over the soil of the Covenant with a most liberal hand, as if the blood of these martyrs were indeed the seed of the Kirk,—would ever dream of going beyond its pages to make acquaintance with the tract itself. In the absence of any reference, it cost us some trouble to find a copy in the Advocates Library,—trouble repaid, however, by discovering more in the tract itself than it had suited the minister of Glasserton's argument to reveal. Indeed our reverend opponent has scarcely been sufficiently candid with the public in this matter. Had the *disclosure* of his new production not been so reserved, he could scarcely have ventured to triumph as he has done in the *discovery*. For in that pamphlet there is a very pregnant passage not to be found in "History Vindicated," although it constitutes the real, indeed the *only* value of this rubbishy flare-up against "Papists" and "Jacobites." At the end of the tract, a long and virulent "Postscript" is introduced, by way of illustrating their horrible cruelties all over the world; and in this unvouched and very suspicious postscript it is that the anonymous author bestows the most prominent place upon the Wigtown Martyrs, his *unique* version of *the mode* of whose immolation, (already quoted), he thus introduces:—

"But, to insist a little upon the cruelties committed in Britain within the forementioned space of time, I *can undertake* to give sufficient documents, from many particular instances, that not a few were cruelly put to death, whose lives could never have been reached even by the then standing laws. But this may probably appear to the world, in the distinct particulars thereof, *hereafter*. I shall briefly condescend only upon one instance,—*because* it's *ordinarily denied* by a *great many* of our modern Jacobites, and said to be *a calumny raised to asperse the late Government*"!

We are now free to admit the value of "*Popery Reviving.*" It *annihilates* that pertinacious nonsense about *tradition*, so anxiously dwelt upon by all our clerical adversaries, as having existed in unbroken, uncontradicted descent, from the date assigned to the martyrdom. It informs us, that in 1713, (the date of this Cameronian's letter), the martyrdom of these

women was "*ordinarily denied,*" and that by a "*great many*" of that very large class of the community against whom the stigma was levelled; and that it was by them declared to be "*a calumny raised to asperse the late Government.*" Now, the first collection, in circumstantial detail, and by *Presbyterial order*, of this leading "suffering," is that contained in the kirk-session minutes of Penninghame, 1711. It was not published, indeed, until 1722. But it was sufficiently known long prior to that, to have been met by the loud and indignant disclaimer which stirred the bile of the author. of "Popery Reviving" in 1713. It cannot, therefore, be rationally doubted, that the extensive *denial* of the calumny is, at least, absolutely contemporaneous with the *first* Presbyterial fabrication of it for "the page of History." And what do we find afterwards? Why, that Wodrow, in 1722, *bullies*, in the same virulent strain, that notorious *denial*, without an attempt to prove,—in fact while *disproving* his own case! Then Walker, the insane chapman, blasphemes against that denial in 1727! So the *Episcopalian disclaimer* was not only *contemporaneous*, but *continuous and constant.* Yet, even at the close of his second edition, enriched as that is by his newly discovered pamphlet,—the marrow of which, however, is not only disregarded, but withheld,—we find our Vindicator of History reiterating his clamorous but flimsy argument, that this pet calumny of the kirk was *never contradicted!* "Would," —he exclaims,—"would the adherents of the late Government have allowed such a calumny to rest upon them, if they had been able, *so easily*, to wipe it off?" Who, at that crisis, cared for such mud adhering to them? They *denied it*, and *constantly* denied it,—which, of itself affords a rational presumption that so public and heart-stirring an event of the Government of the country could not be a reality. But has not that denial of theirs been completely justified by the subsequent recovery of the Privy Council Records, and the recent discovery of the old woman's petition and *peccavi?* Who, in those times, cared to engage in a *systematic controversy* to "wipe off" this contemptible stigma? Would it have placed King James on his throne again? Would it have closed one blatant mouth of the many-headed monster of covenanting

calumny which was constantly vomiting such like accusations against the fallen dynasty? But that is not the present question. The minister of Glasserton takes it upon him to assert, *ad nauseam*, that this story of the "Wigtown Martyrs" never met with denial or contradiction until now, in "Memorials of Dundee." Why, he is sufficiently answered, not indeed out of his own mouth, but out of his own *discovery!*

Nevertheless our reverend opponent is in ectacies over this "Popery Reviving." He tells us that it "*clears up all the obscurities* that have hitherto rested on the manner of the drowning." But why should there have been any obscurities? Was there ever any obscurity about the mode of King Charles's martyrdom, or the manner in which Montrose was murdered? And how came Wodrow to create "obscurities" in 1722, if this tract, which gives a totally different version of the "manner of the drowning" had made it all so clear in 1714? For on searching Wodrow's correspondence, we find that he was quite familiar with it, and had a copy of it immediately after its publication in 1714. In a letter to his friend the minister at Belfast, dated "Eastwood, December 4, 1713," lamenting "our divisions and flames in this country," he writes,—"There is a design, I hear, to print the account of the growth of Popery of late, and spread them in the country, but I doubt if this be done." Now, the date of the letter called Popery Reviving is "December 1713." In another letter from Wodrow, of alarms and lamentations, to his friend at Belfast, dated February 10th 1714, he writes,—"When a private hand offers, I shall send you a paper, published lately in Edinburgh,—"*Popery Reviving*,"—which will give you a fuller view of our present state than I can now write." But did Wodrow *adopt* the account there given of the "mode of the execution"? Not a bit. He says,—"The old woman's stake was *a good way in beyond the other*,"—and he entirely ignores the story of the "stups" fixed on the bank high above the channel of the Blednoch. Moreover, "Popery Reviving" says, that the martyrs, *before* being tethered and tossed, were "allowed some time to perform their last duties of devotion." This was on the dry land, of course. Wodrow, however, figures the virgin martyr going through a complete Presbyterian service *in the*

water, while the tide *was advancing upon her*. His fustian on the subject is utterly inconsistent with the narrative in "Popery Reviving." He says that she prayed "*at the stake*," and that "*while at prayer the water covered her*." Now, Wodrow, in whose own mind there was not a shadow of the martyrdom, was *coached* in the story by the minister of Penninghame, the minutes of whose kirk-session contain no such narrative as we find in "Popery Reviving." And see how both run counter to the testimony of James Ramsay, the contradictor of *Matthias Symson* in 1703. That worthy boldly asserted,—"*I have a paper from eye and ear-witnesses*, of that abominable fact." What fact? Why, that these *women* were executed, not under a Justiciary sentence and the verdict of an assize, but by *martial law*, "without any *due form or process*;" and his commentary is,—"nothing can be more *unaccountable* than to grant such a power to *soldiers*, to kill whomsoever they *met on the road*, or *found at their work*, if they would not give them satisfaction in such matters as they were allowed to interrogate them upon." [1] Where is that "paper from eye and ear-witnesses"?

But the love of Saul for Jonathan was not greater than the minister of Glasserton's love for the "Wigtown Martyrs." It is paramount to all questions of proof, and independent of all the principles of evidence. "Popery Reviving" has disclosed to him a new scene at which he will for ever delight to minister, in his mind's eye, among the "multitude of doolfull beholders." The seraphic words of the martyr maiden,—"No! No! *no sinful oath*,"—are in his ears, and they find an echo in his heart. As that cherished sentiment of his would have impelled them to their doom in *those* days, so, in *these* days, his solemn homily on the subject goes forth to secure to them their martyr crowns,—whether they suffered or not. "While our main design," he says, "is to vindicate the history of Wodrow as a statement of facts, we have this further object in view, —*to preserve to the two sufferers the honour which has hitherto been paid to their memory*"! The glorious *tableau* so recently revealed to him supersedes all other ideas of it,

[1] See before, pp. ccxxvi–ccxxvii.

and he is present at the scene in the ecstatic vision he thus describes :—

" At low water the sea recedes for miles from the town of Wigtown, leaving a large extent of naked sand traversed by the Blednoch. When the sea flows, it rushes rapidly up the channel of the river, and then gradually overflows the banks on both sides. But nearer the town, where the execution is said to have taken place, its advance is not so rapid ; and it is *easy to conceive* the scene described in the above extract being there enacted. While the *deep channel* of the river (at that season of the year a tiny stream) was being filled up by the flowing tide, the executioners *might stand* on the bank, drive in their stubs or stakes, fasten their cords to them, and to the persons of the prisoners, and *force them over the bank*, to *stand* till the deepening waters overwhelmed them. Those who thus carry out the sentence are themselves *in no danger*, and yet *close at hand* to stop the work of death, if there should be any sign of *failing resolution*. They can, without any *unbinding of cords*, or *unloosening of knots*, *pull up the penitent* upon the first cry indicating a change of mind. But still the time allowed cannot be long ; the tide of the terrible Solway will not wait, but will soon overflow the bank, and drive the executioners from their firm footing on the sand. So they can hardly wait for *the tide* doing its work. They *hasten death* in the case of the *elder* sufferer, by forcibly holding her down with *a halbert*[1] under the water, in *the hope* still to *save the life* of the younger, by awing her into submission at the sight of the death-struggle of her ancient friend. But she remains firm, and refuses the ' *sinful oath*.' The rushing tide soon overwhelms her also, and—*the tragedy ends*" !—(*Hist. Vind.*, pp. 45-6, *2d edit.*)

And, as old Terence says,—*vos valete et plaudite!*—A tragedy, reverend Sir ! The very idea of it is a screaming farce. Imagine an obstinate old Galloway *Mause*, very heavy to handle, say about twelve stone, and a well-grown lass of the same *thrawn* Westland-whig breed, by courtesy of Wodrow and Macaulay a " virgin of eighteen," but called in the *Cloud of Witnesses* " about twenty-three," and probably not under ten stone,—imagine this sort of lumbering and ill-to-drive cattle, attended by a *multitudinous* herd of their own kind, all

[1] Nay, how could that be, if the " executioners " were all on the top of the bank, enjoying their " firm footing on the sand," above the " deep channel," in order to be " in no danger " ? Besides, " Popery Reviving " says nothing about a *halbert*. That incident was founded upon the theory of *the Provost of Wigtown* having presided at the execution. But it is *proved* that the Provost was then at headquarters in Edinburgh, and was there when the women received their " *material pardon*."

greatly excited, and confronted only by a single troop of dragoons, who are "*weeping,*" (at which their horses must have laughed),—imagine, we say, such martyrs as these undergoing the terrible and aggravating process of being tethered to stakes, placed high above the rushing tide, by ropes long enough to admit of their being "thrown" bodily into the deep channel below, not to sink or swim, but brought up with a jerk, there to "*stand* till the deepening waters overwhelmed them," unless "*pulled up* on the *first cry* indicating a *change of mind*"!

Were they *acrobats*, to land on their feet when tossed over the brae? Might not the virgin have landed on her head? How could they be made to *stand*, especially seeing matters had been so ordered, that even the "executioners" should not wet their feet? But what a sight to see, must the "pulling up" of that lusty lass have been! Would we were gifted with your powers of vision, reverend Vindicator. Sir Andrew Agnew assures us that the Provost's man "pressed their heads down with his halbert, crying with savage glee, '*there*, tak' another drink o't *my hearties.*'" This seems to be nonsense. But it is "easy to conceive,"—as the virgin was being hastily pulled up by the tow that tethered her sonsy person to the bank above, and while exhibiting, doubtless, some involuntary summersaults as "disorderly" as her kirk habits,—that that devil's-buckie Winram would indulge in some such facetiousness as the famous exclamation which startled the devil himself at his erotic orgies in the ruins of Alloway Kirk. Indeed, the marvel is, how Winram the cruel, whose soft-eyed soldiers would have been but a mouthful for that "*multitude* of doolfull beholders," contrived to escape, without losing a hair of his horse's tail![1]

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[1] We must not fail to notice an important document, produced (but not so perfectly as could have been wished) in this second edition of "History Vindicated," (p. 51), from the State Paper Office, London. It suffices, however, completely to explain how it was that the royal assent to the Government pardon of the three *male rebels* from Cumnock,—who had been actively participating in the *armed rebellion*,—came to be referred to at the Board of Privy Council, (see *supra*, p. ccxiii), while no allusion whatever is met with to the strictly contemporaneous pardon of the two Wigtown women, merely condemned for treasonable obstinacy and contempt in refusing the Abjuration Oath *in præsentia dominorum*. In the

The Minister of Glasserton's Wodrow-worship.

Our reverend opponent has stated, with sententious accuracy, the precise issue between the "Case for the Crown," and "History Vindicated." In doing so, he quotes an extract from the *Case*, the truth and force of which are no ways diminished by being transferred to his hostile pages. We repay the compliment, by the following extracts from his own work, comprehending the choicest specimens of that *Wodrow-worship* which has raised the reputation of the minister of Glasserton, both as a historian and a divine, to so great a height in the eyes of all Covenantdom :—

"Mr Napier's avowed design, then, is to *destroy the credibility of Wodrow*, who, he informs us,—'has misled all our historians of mark, from David Hume to Lord Macaulay, who have blindly followed him, and lazily, or lovingly, submitted to his rubbish, without an attempt at in-

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case of the Cumnock rebels, it was not simply a report of the royal assent to their lives being spared; it is a record of the fact that the Lord High Chancellor, Perth, had to produce to the Privy Council an *important document* (upon which action had to be taken), the nature of which is sufficiently explained by the partial extract of it furnished from the State Paper Office. The extract is,—"*Docquet* of the Warrant for a remission of treason to *Allan Aithen*, *John Pearson*, and *James Napper*." Now, that warrant is not merely for remission of the "pain of death," but for "*Rehabilitating*, *Restoring*, and *Redintegrating* them and *their heirs* to their own *good Names*, *Offices*, and *Privileges*, whereof they are deprived and prejudged by the said *Forfeiture;* and also receiving and reponing them *and their foresaids* in and to your Majesty's favour, mercy, and grace, *ordaining these presents to pass through the Offices and Seals gratis*." Manifestly no such process or document could be applicable to the comparatively insignificant case of the two poor *women*. Accordingly, their case does not come up again in the *Acta* of the Privy Council, that not being a record of the Sovereign's assent to Government remissions from the sentence of death, but of the *Acta* and *Decreta* of the Privy Council. But if the Government pardon of these women, (which passed on their own petition to be allowed to *abjure and live*), had been *vetoed* by the Sovereign, (a thing *impossible* under the circumstances), their case would have come up again, in the *Acta* of the Privy Council, with a vengeance. The minister of Glasserton is *purblind* to the fact, that the actual and admitted *merciful* treatment, by the Government of Scotland, of these dangerous Cumnock rebels, and at such a crisis, renders the *simultaneous cruel* treatment alleged, of these *insignificant Wigtown women*, an absolute impossibility.

vestigation, and thus it is,'—he continues,—'that the national character of Scotland has been defamed by a mock and mythical martyrology of the lowest stamp, and her soil desecrated by fanatical monuments, not to commemorate martyrs, but to perpetuate a calumny.'"

"If this stronghold (the Wigtown martyrdom) shall fall, as Mr Napier so confidently expects, *Wodrow's credit as a historian must sustain irreparable damage*,—the issuing of *a calumny of a gross kind* will have been proved against the *Church of Scotland*, and the future historian of the Restoration period must *discredit* the narratives of sufferings *furnished by the church courts*, or at least say that they rest on doubtful authority.

"This is the grand result which Mr Napier expects to follow from his labours in the field of Scottish history. But his efforts, so far as *successful*, would tend to further results, which we are sure he neither contemplates nor intends, viz., *to serve the cause of scepticism.*

"But we are far from imputing to Mr Napier any design to serve the cause of general scepticism in matters of history, especially of *sacred* history. We regard his object to be merely that which he plainly avows,—to cast discredit on the martyrology of Wodrow, and to prove against the ministers and elders of the Church of Scotland, in 1711, a charge of giving a false version of the history of their church, for the purpose of calumniating those who had for a time ruled this country in the interests, and under the inspiration of *Prelacy*. His design is plainly avowed. Let ours be equally so. *It is to defend Wodrow and the Church of Scotland from Mr Napier's attack*,—to prove that to be a fact which Mr Napier imagines to be a myth—to prove the historical fact in question to be really true, and the authors of it to be no calumniators."—(*Hist. Vind. 2d edition*, Introduction.)

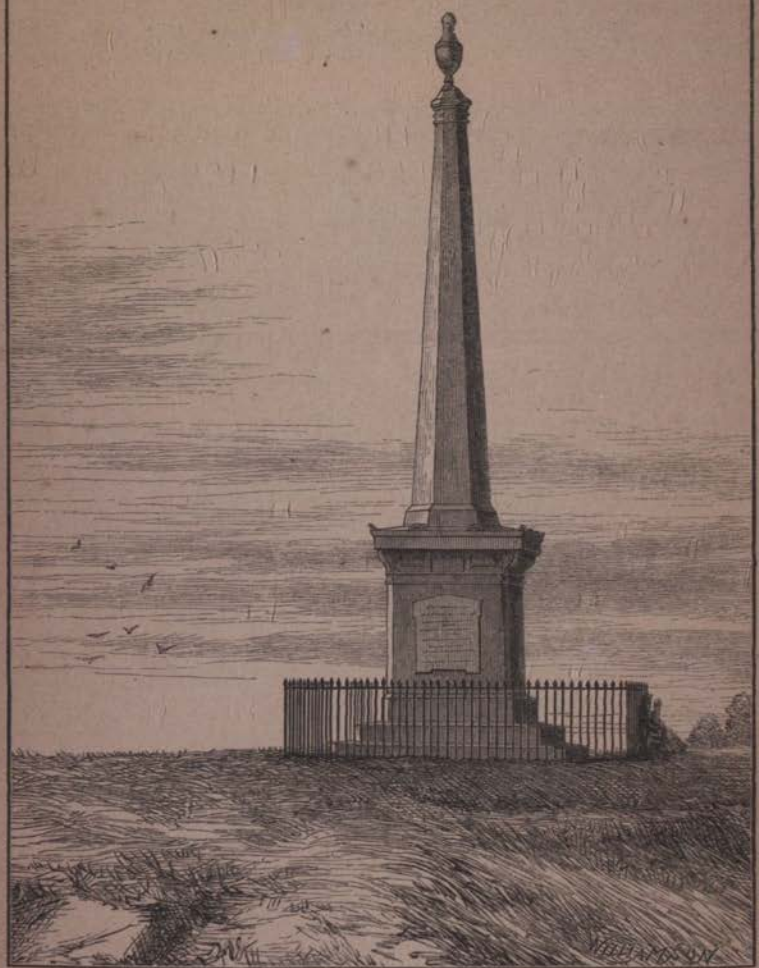
Precisely so. Our object is to prove, that when the rabbled Royalists of Scotland, in the first years of that rampant revolution, complained, loudly and constantly, that this Wigtown martyrdom was "a calumny raised to asperse the late Government," they uttered the language of indignant truth against a tyrannical conspiracy of monstrous lying. Your object, reverend Vindicator, is to persuade the Christian world that this calumny is a sacred thing. You say that if it were *disproved* "Wodrow's credit as a historian must sustain irreparable damage." Granted. But when you add,—"the issuing of a gross calumny will have been proved against the *Church of Scotland*,"—we decline to take you at your word. It is you, Sir, who would "*affix a stigma*" upon that Church, by clinging thus desperately to a paltry and intensely calumnious historian, as if he were the very corner-stone of that time-honoured Temple of which you yourself are a pilaster. You

state with perfect truth the issue between us. You anticipate with terror a consummation devoutly to be prayed for. But that excited dogma of yours, that to *prove* Wodrow a calumniator would tend to "serve the cause of scepticism," and shake the faith of Christians, and would strike at the very root of religious belief in Scotland, is a libel upon her national Church, too foolish to create alarm, and too presumptuous to inspire respect, in the breast of any clear-minded Christian.

> "Truth, ever lovely since the world began,
> The foe of tyrants, and the friend of man,
> How can thy words from balmy slumber start
> Reposing virtue, pillowed on the heart."

But you, reverend Sir, go so far as to say, that if the authority is to be rejected, of "the ministers and elders of the district who, twenty-six years after, certified as a fact" the monstrous fabrication of that Penninghame calumny,—"*even the gospels themselves may be most part fable*"! (p. 7.) Are Kirkinner and Penninghame your Œcumenical Council, are their records the gospels, that the authority, and hypothetical characters of those kirk-sessionists must outweigh all evidence whatsoever? You boastfully parade the useless industry of your petty parochial statistics. You sneer at us for neglecting that field of investigation. We were better employed. We were not so feebly occupied as to be grubbing out such meagre annals, as the natal, ministerial, and obituary *dates*, which compose your biographies of the members of these westland-whig "Church Courts." We tell you frankly, we care not for their births, marriages, ordinations, or deaths. We care neither for their names nor their numbers. We care not though their name were legion and their number 666. As this case stands on the whole proof, we would as soon think of addling our brains about the name and number of the Beast in the Apocalypse. We care not, reverend Vindicator of History, though you proved that every one of them was a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Those two conflicting parochial records, of Kirkinner and Penninghame, destroy each other; and, moreover, are proved to be utterly worthless by the overwhelming evidence that has been brought to bear against them, in every form of proof, and from every legitimate source

of the truth of History. And alas! Vindicator, how have you vindicated these parochial officials, who, you say, "made *themselves responsible* for the truth,"—of what is *proved* to be false? What have all your boasted biographical researches brought to light in favour of their truth? Have you traced the current of their Christian lives, illustrated their individual conduct and characters, or established their title to infallibility? Was it well, reverend Sir, is it anything to boast of, that you have raked among the obscure ashes of the forgotten dead, to prove no more of them, and no better of them, than this,—that they *lived*, and *lied*, and *died*?



THE MARTYRS' MONUMENT AT WIGTOWN.

"Pointing at the skies,
Like a tall bully, lifts the head and lies."—POPE.

THE

CASE FOR THE CROWN

IN RE

THE WIGTOWN MARTYRS PROVED TO BE MYTHS

VERSUS

WODROW AND LORD MACAULAY,
PATRICK THE PEDLER AND PRINCIPAL TULLOCH.

BY MARK NAPIER,
SHERIFF OF DUMFRIESSHIRE.

EX UNO DISCE OMNES.

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PREFACE.

WHETHER two obscure women were or were not executed for high treason in 1685, would be a trifling question to deal with elaborately and systematically, if the case of the WIGTOWN MARTYRS went no deeper. But it lies at the root of that cancerous growth upon the History of Scotland, the Martyrology of the Covenant. Close research has led me to the conviction, that not a single individual was unjustly put to death, for rebellion, or high treason, in Scotland, by the Governments of the Restoration. Unless fanatical assertion be equivalent to truth and justice, there are no sufficient materials for a Martyrology of Scotland during that period. That which we have from Wodrow is a calumnious tissue of monstrous fables. It has poisoned the History of Scotland to an extent that is now, perhaps, irremediable. He has misled all our historians of mark, from David Hume to Lord Macaulay, who have blindly followed him, and lazily, or lovingly, submitted to his rubbish, without an attempt at investigation. And thus it is that the national character of Scotland has been defamed by a mock and mythical martyrology of the lowest stamp, and her soil desecrated by fanatical monuments, not to commemorate the martyrs, but to perpetuate the calumny. Fountainhall, the Whig counsel for the gallows-martyrs of the Restoration, would have laughed Wodrow's Martyrology to scorn. That great lawyer and judge ever stood in political opposition to Lauderdale

and Queensberry. Like all political oppositionists, he was sometimes unfair in his record of their acts, and not always wrong in his judgment of their policy. But had he been Lord Advocate, instead of Sir George Mackenzie, not a single martyr the less would there have been among the people of Scotland. This is abundantly proved by his private journals, which are both voluminous and minute. A kind-hearted man, an exemplary Christian, of unblemished life, and a consistent Whig withal, he has not a word to say about the *persecutions* or *cruelties*, of the Government he opposed, civil or military. On the contrary, he scorned the false prophets of the Conventicles, who furnished him with those miserable clients, and never speaks of them but with contempt. The excited victims themselves he never, in a single instance, records as unjustly executed, or entitled to the sacred name of martyrs. He has elaborate notes on that subject which might have saved the History of England from the puerile pathos of those virulent fables which Lord Macaulay called, *con amore*, from Wodrow without further inquiry. In reference to his own martyrological clients, Fountainhall, among other admirable observations on the subject, says,—"The cause must be very commendable, and justly and clearly founded on the word of God, e'er a man can be esteemed a *martyr* for suffering in it. *Non pœna sed causa facit martyrem.* And a martyr ought to have a clear cause, and a humble frame and preparation of spirit, and a knowledge of what he dies for." But what would Fountainhall have said of Wodrow's grand Martyrology, which is made up not only of such *mock* martyrdoms, most falsely told, but of *mythical* martyrdoms, as fabulous in point of fact, as they are calumnious in spirit? Weeded of fable, calumny, and fanatical railing, Wodrow's two folio volumes would vanish, or resolve into an appendix of public documents that contradict him. His calumnious legend of the life and death of John Brown, whom he dubs

"the Christian Carrier," no longer exists as truth in history. It may suit some still to pretend, that the legal execution, under martial law, of an obstinate outlawed rebel, who had deeply forfeited his life to the laws of his country, who was lurking in arms at the very time to join the foreign invader, and who was carrying treasonable papers, is all one with the unintelligible murder, and by Claverhouse with his own hand, of a peaceable and industrious peasant, walking blamelessly in the sight of God and man. But thanks to the crowning discovery of Claverhouse's own letter, that ridiculous calumny has been utterly extinguished, in the face of Lord Macaulay's vicious adoption of it. No future historian will ever repeat that story as it has been told over and over again for nearly a century and a half. None can now point, with the finger of truth, to a single act in the whole career of the high-hearted hero of Killiecrankie, that gainsays his own noble defence of himself,—"I am as sorry to see a man die, even a Whig, as any of themselves. But when one dies *justly*, for his own faults, and may *save a hundred to fall in the like*, I have no scruple."

But another Wodrow blotch, corrupting the blood of Scottish history to its heart's core, had spread wider and deeper still. It seems that "Memorials of Dundee" have not quite succeeded in eradicating the *Wigtown martyrdom*. It may not be absolutely disproved, pronounces a leading English journal of letters, but the proofs have been "rudely shaken." It has occurred to myself as a positive duty to the intelligent public, not to leave such a question imperfectly illustrated in a voluminous and expensive work such as "Memorials of Dundee," (out of which the materials were being already filched by feeble pamphleteers), but to produce the exposition of it in a shape more tangible and complete. So I now sit down before this last stronghold of the Wodrow martyrology, and hope to leave it also in ruins.

The proofs will here be found more thoroughly digested, and more systematically arranged, than could well be done in "Memorials of Dundee." In searching for more light, more has been discovered, and still to the effect of destroying the pet martyrdom of the Kirk. I have paused long enough, and searched deep enough, to justify some confidence that no deeper researches are likely to restore the credit of this calumnious romance. Keen and angry have been the struggles in some quarters to do so. But the result (itself an argument against the truth of the martyrdom) as yet may be stated in three words,—scribbling, nibbling, and quibbling.

What sort of a martyrdom is that, which, during the lapse of nearly two centuries, has *never been proved;* and, when challenged as a falsehood at the end of that period, is admitted, by its keenest supporters, not to be proved yet, and seemingly to be incapable of proof? What sort of a *tradition,* or "general belief," is that, which arose not at the time, and was expressly and positively denied to be fact before 1722, when Wodrow published, and *still* "denied to be matter of fact," in 1727, when Walker wrote? Some may think it both unnecessary and rash to attempt to prove the *negative,* that these "Wigtown Martyrs" were *not drowned.* But such is the nature of covenanting calumny, that unless that negative be proved, the Wigtown monument, which, "like a tall bully, lifts its head and lies," will continue to lift its head and lie as loud as ever. With what success that usually difficult task of proving a negative has been accomplished in the following pages, I now leave to the judgment of the Public.

MARK NAPIER.

6 Ainslie Place,
10*th March* 1863.

PART FIRST.

THE ROMANCE OF THE WIGTOWN MARTYRS PROVED TO BE FALSE.

PART FIRST.

THE ROMANCE OF THE WIGTOWN MARTYRS PROVED TO BE FALSE.

SECTION I.

Lord Macaulay's version of the Wigtown Martyrdom incredible on the face of it.

By way of justifying a calumny he could not prove, and which he condescends to borrow from a sect he despised—that James II. was a monster of inhumanity, and his government of Scotland "Tophet on earth"—Lord Macaulay tells this story in his History of England:—

"The *eleventh of May* (1685) was made remarkable by more than one great crime. On the same day two women, Margaret Maclachlan and Margaret Wilson—the former an aged widow, the latter a *maiden of eighteen*—suffered death for *their religion* in Wigtownshire. They were offered their lives if they would consent to *abjure the cause* of the insurgent conventiclers, and to attend *the Episcopal worship*. They refused, and they were sentenced to be drowned. They were carried to a spot which the Solway overflows twice a-day, and were *fastened to stakes* fixed in the sand between high and low water-mark. The *elder* sufferer was placed near to the advancing flood, *in the hope* that her last agonies might terrify the *younger* into submission. *The sight was dreadful.* But the courage of the survivor was sustained by an enthusiasm as lofty as any that is recorded in martyrology. She saw the sea draw nearer and nearer, but gave no sign of alarm. She prayed, and sang verses of psalms, till *the waves choked her voice.* After she had tasted the bitterness of death, she was, by a *cruel mercy, unbound*, and *restored to life.*

When she came to herself, pitying friends and neighbours implored her to yield. '*Dear Margaret*, only say, *God save the King!*' The poor girl, true to her *stern theology*, gasped out, 'May God save him, if it be God's will.' *Her friends crowded round* the presiding officer—'She has said it; *indeed, sir*, she has said it.' 'Will she take the abjuration?' he demanded. 'Never!' she exclaimed, 'I am Christ's, let me go!' and the waters closed over her for the last time."—(*Hist.* vol. iv., p. 77. *Latest edition.*)

It is now pretty well understood, at least by all who read history for other purposes than mere amusement, that when Lord Macaulay discourses after this fashion, his facts are apt to be fabulous. The truth is, as regards the period of history he is thus professing to illustrate, the mind of this great author, all accomplished and well stored as it was, had become sadly warped on the subject of imaginary cruelties perpetrated, and always upon the weakest, the most innocent, and the most Christian, by the governments of the Restoration. Closing his mind against the light of truth from all incongenial quarters, he delighted to exercise his facile pen in epitomizing his political anathemas with a terseness of invective natural to his domineering talent, and in the current form, and upon such incidental occasions, as might scarcely seem to justify the expectation of an array of proofs, or a frank and accurate disclosure of authorities. Indeed, he was utterly reckless of historical proofs when in such a mood. Thus, in his essay on Hallam's History, referring to the commencement of the Restoration, he says:—

"The Government *wanted a ruffian* to carry on the most atrocious system of misgovernment with which any nation was ever *cursed;* to *extirpate Presbyterianism* by fire and sword, by *the drowning of women*, by the frightful torture of the boot; and they found him among the chiefs of the rebellion, and the subscribers of the Covenant."

Of course, this means Lauderdale, who, as all the world knows, passed, by a transition easily accounted for, from his Presbyterian glory as a "prime Covenanter," to his more notorious career as a bloated courtier. But never a woman did Lauderdale drown, whatever other sins he may have to answer for. Was the fact really unknown to Lord Macaulay, that the *only* case ever specifically alleged by the bitterest and most unscrupulous of Covenanting pamphleteers in the very

hey-day of the Revolution, of the drowning of any State criminal, male or female, from the restoration of King Charles to the crowning of King William, is this solitary mythical case of *Margaret Lauchlison* and *Margaret Wilson* in 1685? Unless that story be true, no woman whatever was executed by drowning *during the whole period of the Restoration.* And whether true or false, no woman whatever was so disposed of during the administration of Lauderdale, who died in 1682.

Then as for Lord Macaulay's version of this melo-dramatic martyrdom, what reflecting mind could peruse it and not be struck with the total absence of *vraisemblance* that pervades the whole narrative? Had such a story been told by Sir Walter Scott for the purpose of debasing the character of King William, Lord Macaulay would have been the first to visit it with the most withering scorn. Mark the evasion of all explicit historical elucidation, or proof, in a question of great historical importance. Could that *ad captandum* mode of telling such a story have any other object than to escape the test of historical investigation? Still, with all the art of his diction, the romance, as he gives it, seems improbable in the highest degree. Under what authority, judicial or executive, could it possibly have happened, that such a scene was enacted, hard by the royal burgh of Wigtown, as if wantonly to excite the feelings, inflame the passions, and strengthen the cause of the most rebellious population in Scotland, at the very time when Argyle's invasion was daily expected in that quarter? No such scene had ever occurred in Scotland before. No such scene has ever occurred in Scotland since. Can there be discovered any Commission of Justiciary, or any order of Council in 1685, under which aged and young of the female sex, saintly in their lives, and harmless in their habits, could, by any possibility, have been "sentenced to be drowned" for declining "to attend the Episcopal worship?" And as for refusing "to *abjure the cause* of the insurgent Covenanters," what does that mean? If it mean, obstinately and violently, in the face of a tribunal of justice, and in presence of an audience of the people in a rebellious district, refusing to *disown*, and to absolve themselves, in terms of the Government test, from being connected with Renwick's anonymous pro-

clamation of war against the State, and his violent incentives to assassinate the advisers and loyal adherents of the Crown, paraded on all the church-doors and market-crosses in the south and west of Scotland (and the *Abjuration Oath* of 1685 required no more), Lord Macaulay was guilty of *suppressio veri* in not saying so. And had he ventured to be historically explicit on the subject, the answer must have met him, that these females, whose mythical fate he so elaborately, but somewhat fantastically narrates, could not have been the paragons he figures, seeing it can be distinctly proved that they were tried and condemned by Lords Commissioners of Justiciary, to whom the Privy Council had issued this precise, peremptory, and humane direction,—"But at this time you are not to examine *any women* but such as have been *active* in the said courses *in a signal manner.*"

To all conversant with the history of Argyle's invasion in 1685, so alarming for the regal Government, and who are well read in the records of the Privy Council of Scotland, it is known that such Royal Commissioners were always placed under the most precise official instructions, strictly defining their duties, both as regards trial and punishment, instructions beyond which they never presumed to act, and could only have done so at their highest peril. Was there ever any such direction as this, that if an aged matron and a young maiden should happen to be tried and condemned together, "for their religion," as Lord Macaulay has it, that they were to be drowned by this very novel *modus operandi:*—The old one was to be fastened to a stake driven into the sand of the making tide, nearer the devouring ocean than the stake provided for her youthful partner, "that her last agonies might *terrify* the younger into submission?" Was there any instruction or authority whereby venerable Christianity, hallowed by age, tried by long years, was, at the arbitrary fiat of some "presiding officer," to have no measure of mercy allowed, but was destined to enact, after this very peculiar fashion, the part of decoy-duck to "cruel mercy?" The details of Lord Macaulay's episode are absolutely incredible, and all the embellishments bear the stamp of the most fantastical invention: The story runs (to adopt a favourite phrase of his own, certainly not

belonging to legitimate history), that the "maiden of eighteen" was not to be so seduced; that the tide of the terrible Solway came rolling on and "choked her voice" until she "tasted the bitterness of death," upon which she was "unbound and restored to life." What! with the tide of the Solway rushing over head? Was she tied to the stake by a slip-knot? She was restored, however, to life, to speech, and to loyalty, for she "gasped out" a most orthodox, though somewhat elaborate version of *God save the King*. The "presiding officer," and, pray, who was he? being a glutton in "cruel mercy," was not satisfied, however, and without a vestige of authority to assume that very important function, pressed the *Abjuration Oath* upon a condemned criminal, dead in the eye of the law, and more than half executed in point of fact! "'Never!' she exclaimed, 'I am Christ's, let me go!' and the waters closed over her for the last time." Did Lord Macaulay really believe this nonsense himself? By this time, unless the tide stood still, the stake must have been under water. How was this virgin sacrifice really consummated? Was she tied to the stake again, or did "cruel mercy" just cast her neck-and-crop into the water to sink or swim? On the part of *History proper*, common sense demands some explicit and intelligible statement as to the practical conclusion of this very extraordinary operation. We are not trifling: these are not carping or silly questions. We do not, indeed, profess to treat this sensation romance with the slightest respect. We have learnt to hold it in the greatest contempt. But here is a fair cross-examination of a highly responsible historian, under which, we suspect, Lord Macaulay would have found himself compelled to remain absolutely silent. But let us now confront him with his *sole authority*, which he only vouchsafes to give, at the foot of his page, in this very curt form—"*Wodrow*, III., ix., 6."

SECTION II.

Wodrow's version of the Wigtown Martyrdom ignored by Lord Macaulay in its most essential circumstances, while professing to found upon it.

The passage in Wodrow's "History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland," referred to by Lord Macaulay, occurs under this violent *ad captandum* title, which Wodrow had copied from Alexander Shield's "Hind Let Loose." "Of the *murders* in the fields; the *barbarous drowning of women* within the sea-mark; the *murder* of Polmadie and others, this 1685." Wodrow's sole illustration, indeed the *only* example adduced by *any chronicler whatever*, from that time to this, of the "drowning of women," during the whole reigns of the Restoration, we must here give entire, in the very words of the martyrologist:—

"Upon the 11th of May (1685), we meet with the *barbarous and wicked* execution of two *excellent* women near Wigtown, *Margaret M'Lauchlane* and *Margaret Wilson*. History scarce affords a parallel to this in all its circumstances; and therefore I shall give it at the greater length; and *the rather*, because the *advocates for the cruelty* of this period, and *our Jacobites*, have the *impudence* some of them to deny, and others to extenuate, this matter of fact, which can be fully evinced by many living witnesses. And I shall mostly give my narrative of it, from an account I have from the forementioned Mr Rowan, now with the Lord, late minister of Penninghame, where Margaret Wilson lived, who was at pains to have its circumstances fully vouched by witnesses, *whose attestations are in my hands*;[1] and I shall add, to make the account more full, the sufferings of the said Margaret's relations, though not unto death, as coming in natively enough here, and what will hand me in to what I have most in view.

"Gilbert Wilson, father to the said Margaret, lived in Glenvernoch, belonging to the laird of Castlestewart, in the parish of Penninghame, and shire of Wigtown, and was *every way conform to Episcopacy*, and his wife *without anything to be objected against her* as to her regularity. They were in good circumstances as to the world, and had a great stock upon good ground, and *therefore* were the fitter prey for the persecutors,

[1] The nature of Mr Rowan's communication to Wodrow, and the disingenuousness of the latter in pretending to possess "attestations by witnesses" of the martyrdom in question, will appear in the sequel.

if they could reach them. Their children, to be sure, not from their *education*, but a *better principle*, would by no means *conform*, or hear the Episcopal incumbent. This was a *good handle* to the persecutors; so they were searched for, but fled to the *hills*, *bogs*, *and caves*, though they were yet scarce of the age that made them obnoxious to the law. Meanwhile their parents are charged, at their highest peril, not to harbour them, supply them, or speak to them, or see them, without *informing* against them, that they might be taken; and their father was fined for his *children's* alleged irregularities and *opinions*, which *he had no share in*; and harassed by frequent quarterings of the soldiers, sometimes a hundred of them upon him at once, who lived at discretion upon anything in the house or field belonging to him.

"Those troubles continuing upon him for *some years together*, with his attendance upon courts at Wigtown, almost once a week, thirteen miles distant from his house, his *going to Edinburgh*, and other harassings, brought him under exceeding great losses. At a modest calculation they were above five thousand merks; and all for *no action or principle of his own*, for he was *entirely conformist*. He died some six or eight years ago in great poverty, though one of the most substantial countrymen in that county. And his wife (1711) lives, a very aged widow, upon the charity of friends. His son, Thomas Wilson, a youth of *sixteen years of age* this February 1685, was forced to the mountains, and continued *wandering* till the Revolution, at which time he went to the army, and bore arms under King William in Flanders, and after that in the Castle of Edinburgh. He never had a farthing from his parents to enter that ground which he possessed; but having got together somewhat by his own industry, lives now in his father's room, and is *ready to attest all I am writing*.

"It is Gilbert's two daughters who fell into the hands of the persecutors—Margaret Wilson, of *eighteen* years of age, and Agnes Wilson, *a child not thirteen* years—that have led me to this account. Agnes, the youngest, *was condemned with her sister* by those *merciless* judges; but her father obtained a liberation from prison, under a bond of a hundred pounds sterling, to present her when called. However, Gilbert had to *go to Edinburgh* before she was let out; but to all *onlookers*, and *posterity*, it will remain an *unaccountable* thing, *to sentence a child of thirteen years to death*, for *not hearing*, and *not swearing*.[1]

"In the beginning of this year (1685), those *two sisters* were obliged to abscond, and wander through Carrick, Galloway, and Nithsdale, with their brothers and some others. After the universal severities slackened a little at King Charles's death, the *two sisters* ventured to go to Wigtown to see some of their suffering acquaintances there, particularly *Margaret M'Lauchlan*, of whom just now. When they came to Wigtown, there was an acquaintance of theirs, Patrick Stewart, whom they took to be a

[1] Wodrow here assumes, as an unquestionable fact, that which could not possibly have occurred, which he makes no attempt to prove, and then calls it "an unaccountable thing!" Of this afterwards.

friend and wellwisher; but he was really *not so*, and *betrayed them*. Being in their company, and *seeking* an occasion against them, he proposed *drinking the King's health*. This they *modestly declined*; upon which he went out, informed against them, and brought in *a party of soldiers*, and seized them. As if they had been great malefactors, they were *put in the thieves'* hole; and after they had been there some time, they were removed to the prison where *Margaret M'Lauchlan* was, whom I come next to give some account of.

"This woman was about sixty-three years of age, relict of John Mulligen, carpenter, a tenant in the parish of Kirkinner, in the shire of Galloway, in the farm of Drumjargan, belonging to Colonel Vans of Barnbarroch. She was a countrywoman of *more than ordinary knowledge, discretion*, and *prudence*, and, for many years, of *singular piety and devotion*. She would take none of the oaths now *pressed upon women* as well as men.[1] Neither would she desist from the duties she took to be incumbent upon her, hearing Presbyterian ministers when Providence gave opportunity, and joining with her Christian friends and acquaintances in prayer, and supplying her relations and friends when in straights, though persecuted. It is a jest to suppose her guilty of rising in arms and rebellion, though indeed it was a part of her indictment, which she got in common form now used. For those great crimes, and no other, she was seized some while ago, upon the Lord's-day, when at *family worship* in her own house, which was now an *ordinary season* for apprehending *honest folk*. She was imprisoned, after she had suffered much in her goods and crop before she was apprehended. In prison she was very roughly dealt with, and had neither *fire*, nor *bed to lie upon*, and had very little to live upon.

"Jointly with Margaret M'Lauchlan, or M'Lauchlison, these two young sisters, after many methods were taken to *corrupt* them, and make them swear the oath now imposed,[2] which they steadily refused, were brought to their trial before the Laird of Lagg, Colonel David Graham, sheriff, Major Windram, and Provost Cultrain, who gave *all the three* an indictment for rebellion, Bothwell Bridge, Ayrds-moss, and being at twenty field conventicles. No matter how false and calumnious poor people's indictments were.[3] None of the pannels had ever been within twenty miles of Bothwell or Ayrdsmoss. Agnes Wilson could be but eight years of age at Ayrdsmoss; and her sister but about twelve or

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[1] While telling this cock-and-bull story, every paragraph of which bespeaks its falsity, Wodrow was perfectly cognisant of that order of the Privy Council 1684-5, which says,—"But at this time you are *not to examine any women*, but such as have been *active* in the said courses, *in a signal manner*."

[2] The Abjuration Oath of 1684-5, of which afterwards.

[3] These are all gratuitous assumptions of Wodrow's own, as to the contents of their indictment, of which there is no record extant, except a notice of it in the old woman's petition for mercy, and which notice *completely contradicts* Wodrow's account, as will be seen afterwards.

thirteen; and it was *impossible* they could have any access to those risings. Margaret M'Lauchlan was as free as they were.

"*All the three* refused the *Abjuration Oath;* and it was *unaccountable* it should be put to one of them.[1] The assize bring them in guilty, and the Judges pronounced their sentence, that, upon the 11th *instant* [May], *all the three* should be tied to stakes fixed within the flood-mark in the water of Bladnoch, near Wigtown, where the sea flows at high water, there to be drowned. We *have seen* that *Agnes Wilson* was *got out* by her father upon a bond of an hundred pounds sterling, which, *I hear*, upon her *non-production*, was likewise exacted. *Margaret Wilson's* friends used all means to prevail with her to take the *Abjuration Oath*, and to engage to *hear the curates*, but she stood fast in her integrity, and would not be shaken. They received their sentence with a great deal of composure, and *cheerful countenances*, reckoning it their honour to suffer for Christ and his truth. During her imprisonment *Margaret Wilson* wrote a large letter to her relations, full of a deep and affecting sense of God's love to her soul, and an entire resignation to the Lord's disposal. She likewise added a vindication of her refusing to save her life by taking the *abjuration*, and engaging to conformity; against both she gives arguments with a *solidity of judgment* far above one of her years and education.[2]

"This barbarous sentence was executed the foresaid day, May 11th, and the two women were brought from Wigtown, with a *numerous crowd of spectators*, to so *extraordinary* an execution. Major Windram, with some soldiers, guarded them to the place of execution. The old woman's stake was a *good way in beyond* the other, in order to *terrify* the other to a compliance with such oaths and conditions as they required. But in vain; for she adhered to her principles with an unshaken confidence. When the water was overflowing her fellow-martyr, some about *Margaret Wilson* asked her what she thought of the other now struggling with the pangs of death? She answered,—'What do I see but Christ in one of his members, wrestling there. Think you that *we* are the sufferers? No; it is Christ in us, for he sends none a warfare on their own charges.' When *Margaret Wilson* was at the stake she sang the 25th Psalm, from verse 7th downward a good way, and read the 8th

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[1] It would indeed have been "unaccountable" had they offered it to a child "not *thirteen* years of age." The royal proclamation on the subject is thus noted by Fountainhall:—

"*December* 30, 1684.—There is a proclamation at the market-cross of Edinburgh, ordaining an oath to be tendered to all *past sixteen years of age*, disclaiming the *declaration of war*, mentioned 13th November 1684, and the *assassination principles* of the lawfulness of murdering the King's soldiers; and thereupon to have a *pass and certificate*, else to be reputed as favourers of them."—*Fountainhall's Decisions*, i. 328.

[2] This letter is not forthcoming in Wodrow's History; nor is it to be found among his manuscripts, or anywhere else. Wodrow's statement, with regard to it, is copied *verbatim* from the "Cloud of Witnesses." Of this afterwards.

chapter of the Romans with a great deal of cheerfulness, and then prayed. While at prayer, the water *covered her;* but before she was quite dead, they *pulled her up*, and held her out of the water till she was recovered, and able to speak; and then, by Major Windram's orders, she was asked if she would pray for the King? She answered, she wished the salvation of all men, and the damnation of none. One, deeply affected with the death of the other, and her case, said,—'*Dear Margaret*, say *God save the King*, say *God save the King.*' She answered, in the greatest steadiness and composure,—*God save him*, if he will, for it is his salvation I desire. Whereupon some of her *relations* near by, desirous to have her life spared if possible, called out to Major Windram,[1]—'Sir, she hath said it, she hath said it.' Whereupon the Major came near, and *offered her the abjuration*, charging her instantly to swear it, otherwise return to the water. Most deliberately she refused, and said,—'I will not, I am one of Christ's children, let me go.' Upon which she was *thrust down again* into the water, where she finished her course with joy. She died a virgin martyr, about *eighteen* years of age; and both of them suffered precisely upon refusing conformity, and the Abjuration Oath,[2] and were *evidently* innocent of anything worthy of death; and since properly they suffered upon refusing the *abjuration*, for refusing of which *multitudes* were cut off in the fields with less ceremony, and at the time when these *murders* were so common, I have brought them in here.

"*It is of more importance to observe*, that, in the Council-Registers, *since I wrote what is above*, I find what follows:—'*April* last, *Margaret* '*Wilson* and *Margaret M'Lauchlison*, under sentence of death pronounced 'by the Justices, are continued till , and the Lords of his 'Majesty's Privy Council recommend it to the Secretaries to procure their 'remission.' The day to which they are reprieved is blank in the records; but I may safely suppose it would be for a longer day than the 11th of *May*, there being scarcely time, betwixt the 30th of *April* and that, to get a return from the Secretaries. Indeed, at this time a recommendation from the Council for a remission was looked on as *a material pardon;* and if I may *conjecture*, Gilbert Wilson, when he, *as we heard*, after the sentence of *all the three*, made application at *Edinburgh*, seems to have *prevailed* as to all the three, and the case was *extremely favourable.* If matters stand thus, the *people at Wigtown* are deeply guilty, and had *no powers* for what they did; and the death of these persons was what the Council *ought to have prosecuted them for.*"

Are we to laugh or cry? *Solventur risu tabulæ.* This concluding information is indeed "of more importance" than the whole tissue of wild improbabilities, and *impossibilities*, which precedes it. So important is it, that had the truth and justice of history been a principle of Wodrow's undertaking,

[1] Windram was only captain-lieutenant of dragoons.

[2] It will be proved in the sequel that both of these women did take the Abjuration Oath.

he would have drawn his pen through all that goes before, and, as to this martyrdom at least, commenced his researches anew. It fairly entitles the intelligent reader to do so. Even by his own shewing, the Government he so recklessly assails, instead of perpetrating this "unaccountable" cruelty, as he might well call it, had interposed *humanity*. These two women, instead of being executed in terms of their sentence,—under that grand melo-dramatic exhibition for which the genius of Lord Macaulay found the phrase "cruel mercy,"—were reprieved by the Privy Council in a form which even Wodrow confesses to be "a material pardon." And is that feeble conclusion all the martyrologist had to say about a discovery which, as we shall find, really turns the whole of his glaring improbabilities into an impossibility? Was there ever so meagre a proportion of the *bread* of historical candour to so inordinate a measure of the *sack* of fanatical calumny! That discovery, manifestly most unwelcome to the martyrologist, as it is even now to his disciples of the present day (whom we have only very recently compelled for the first time to face it), destroyed at once, as he must have seen, not merely the accusation against the Government, but one of the most salient and startling particulars that embellish his romance. He had the boldness to assert that a child "not thirteen years of age," a girl scarcely out of her infancy, had been capitally tried with the other two, received her sentence with a "cheerful countenance," and was in like manner condemned "to be tied to a stake fixed within the flood-mark, there to be drowned!" He perils this monstrous assertion (unsupported, as usual, by a shadow of evidence), entirely oblivious of the fact that the royal proclamation, and orders of the Privy Council, by authority of which these two women had been brought to trial, were expressly limited, in the application, to parties *above the age of sixteen*. But his own subsequent discovery clinches that matter. This female child, he says, was condemned to death with the other two. But she is not *reprieved* along with them. Was it not as necessary to apply for the royal mercy in her case as in that of her elder companions? If condemned to death in company with her adult sister, would she not have been reprieved along with her? Do

we require further evidence to satisfy us that *that* part of Wodrow's story, at least, is a falsehood as absurd as it is calumnious? Are we bound to be tender of it, and to give it a gentler name?

Then, it will be observed, Wodrow had premised his verbose romance with an indignant announcement, that, at the time he is writing, between 1710 and 1722, a very large proportion of the intelligent community, whom, *more solito*, he strives to disparage by the odious epithets, "the *advocates* for the *cruelty* of this period, and *our Jacobites*," actually *denied the truth* of this drowning story altogether. And yet, after all his hectoring on the subject, he is constrained to wind up with so complete a justification of the very denial he had denounced as "impudence," that, verily, "our Jacobites" of 1710-22 required no further justification.

And what does Lord Macaulay make of all this? Is it not deplorable—does it not rouse the indignation of every just mind, and clear understanding—to find an author of his great powers, and high position, pandering to, and even going beyond, the historical calumnies of Wodrow, instead of detecting and exposing them? Must we be tender of that too? Can we treat his own pretensions, as a great historian, with perfect respect, when we find him, so dictatorially, and in the most unqualified terms, recording the execution of these two women as an act of the most *savage cruelty* on the part of *James II.*; giving the illustration expressly in reference to his violent assertion, that, "the *fiery persecution* which had *raged* when James ruled Scotland as Viceroy, waxed *hotter than ever* from the day on which he became Sovereign;" and, in support of all this, vouchsafing no other reference than "*Wodrow*, III., ix. 6;" there being under Lord Macaulay's eye at the very time, in the very page he is quoting, Wodrow's own most important admission, that, after all the calumny he had penned, the fact had unexpectedly risen up, in judgment against his reckless history, that these two female martyrs had actually been reprieved by the Privy Council, and reprieved in a form he is constrained to admit amounts to "a material pardon;" that "the case was extremely favourable;" that he, Wodrow, was thus driven to "conjecture" that the application for mercy

had "*prevailed* as to *all three;*" and that it must have been some *unauthorised murderers*, whom he blindly designates as "the people at Wigtown," who had put the women thus publicly and dramatically to death, in defiance of the Government and the law, despite the mercy of the Crown, and in the face of hundreds of a rebellious mob, who upon this occasion had law and justice entirely on their side! Thus partially does Lord Macaulay deal with the only authority he quotes for a highly criminative episode in his own history, incredible even as he has given it. But had he, instead of omitting, in his too select extract, Wodrow's lame and impotent conclusion, fulfilled his own duty as a historian, by following out the hint, and consulting the *now* very accessible records of the Privy Council, he would there have discovered a most important *additional* fact, so utterly incompatible with Wodrow's romance, as to suggest a strong motive for that disingenuous martyrologist's very convenient *abridgment* of a record which, in his day, was all but absolutely inaccessible to the public.

SECTION III.

The Reprieve of the Wigtown Women, as recorded in the Register of the Privy Council, not fully or fairly given by Wodrow in his Extract therefrom.

Distinctly engrossed in one of the best preserved books of the *Acta* of the Privy Council for the year 1685, appears the following entry, being that which Wodrow leads his readers to suppose he had quoted *verbatim*, but of which, it will be seen, he had withheld from the public both the *substantial form* and a *most important particular*.

"The Lords of his Majesty's Privy Councill doe hereby reprive the execution of the sentance of death pronounced by the Justices against *Margret Wilson* and *Margret Lauchlison* untill the day of , and discharges *the Magistrates of Edinburgh* for putting of the said sentence to execution against them untill the forsaid day · And

recommends the said *Margret Wilson* and *Margret Lauchlison*, to the Lords Secretaries of State, to interpose with his most sacred Majesty for the royall remission to them."

The sederunt of Privy Council, under which this reprieve (unquestionably tantamount to a pardon) is entered, bears date the last day of April 1685. There is recorded, as being present at that sederunt, besides the other councillors, the Lord High Commissioner (Queensberry), representing his Majesty; the Lord Chancellor; the Lord President of the Session; the *Lord Advocate* (Sir George Mackenzie); the Lord Justice-Clerk; and two ordinary Lords of Session. They are entered in the register in this form and order:—

"*Apud Edinburgum, ultimo die Aprilis* 1685.

"His Majesty's High Commissioner, his Grace.

Chancellor,	Tweedale,	President of Session,
Atholl,	Balcarres,	Advocate,
Drumlanrig,	Kintore,	Justice-Clerk,
Strathmore,	Viscount Tarbat,	Castlehill,
Southesque,	Livingstoun,	Sir George Monro,
Panmuir,	Kinnaird,	Gosfoord."

Until the author of these pages, who had learnt to distrust Wodrow's abridgments, examined the register for himself, and published the above in Memorials of Dundee, the very important circumstance, withheld by the martyrologist, had *never been revealed at all*, namely, that these two women, at the date of their reprieve, 30th April 1685, were lodged in the Tolbooth of *Edinburgh*, under the executive jurisdiction of the Magistrates of the metropolis, and that by this time the local authorities, whom Wodrow calls "the people at Wigtown," had *nothing whatever to do with them.*

One important document connected with the pardon of these women Wodrow seems never to have stumbled upon. Among such of the loose drafts and warrants of the Privy Council proceedings as still exist among the records of the Register House of Edinburgh, there is yet preserved the *original petition for mercy* of *Margaret Lauchlison*, the elder of these two delinquents. It is duly authenticated by a notary-public, and two witnesses, at the desire of the petitioner, who declared she could not write. Upon this petition her reprieve and consequent pardon had followed:—

" Unto his Grace my Lord High Commissioner, and remanent Lords of his Majesties most Honourable Privie Counsell :

" The humble supplication of *Margaret Lachlisone*, and now prisoner in the Tolbuith of Wigton :

" Sheweth :

" That, whereas I being justlie condemned to die, by the Lords Commissioners of his Majesties most Honourable Privie Counsell and Justiciarie, in ane Court holden at Wigtoune the threttein day of Apryle *instant*, for my *not disowning* that traiterous *Apollogetical Declaration*, laitlie affixed at severall *paroch churches* within this kingdom, and my *refusing the Oath of Abjuration of the saymein*, which was occasioned by my not perusing the saymein : And now, I haveing considdered the said declaratione, doe acknowledge the saymein to be traiterous, and tends to nothing but rebellione and seditione, and to be quyt contrair unto the wrytin word of God ; and am content to *abjure the same with my whol heart and soull :*

" May it therefoir please your Grace, and remanent Lords, as said is, to take my cais to your serious consideratione, being *about the age of thre-scor ten years*, and to take pitie and compassione on me, and recall the foirsaid sentance so justlie pronuncet against me ; and to *grant warrand*, to any your Grace thinks fit, to *administrat the Oath of Abjuration to me ;* and, upon my takeing of it, to order my liberatione ; and your supplicant shall leive heirafter ane good and faithfull subject in tyme cuming ; and shall frequent the ordinances, and live regularly, and give what other obedience your Grace, and remanent Lords, sall prescryve thereanent ; and your Petitioner shall ever pray.

"*De mandato dictæ Margaretæ Lauchlisone, scribere necien., ut asseruit, ego Gulielmus Moir, notarius publicus, subscribo, testante hoc meo chyrographo,—*

" J. Dunbar, *witness.*

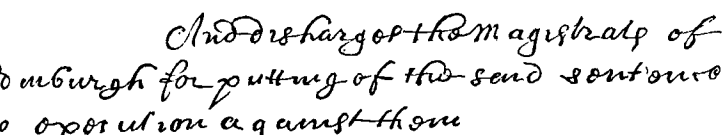
" Will. Gordoun, *witness.*"

And now we are out of the regions of romance and martyrological rhodomontade, and can plant a firm foot upon historical record. These two women, condemned at Wigtown, had been allowed to petition the Privy Council for a remission of their sentence, upon their taking the Abjuration Oath, which they had obstinately refused before, but which they now craved should be administered to them by warrant of the Privy Council. The immediate consequence had been, that they were removed to head-quarters in Edinburgh, and that the Oath of Abjuration had been taken by them there, under the authority of the Privy Council, who had then pardoned these repentant convicts, in the form of a reprieve *sine die*, which of course had to be remitted to London for the formal sanction of the Crown.

The petition of the younger female has not been discovered. But there can be no rational doubt that her reprieve had in like manner proceeded upon her application for mercy, and repentant willingness to take the Oath of Abjuration. They had both cried *peccavi*, and so were reprieved together, indicating that they had been tried and condemned together. And as for the child, "not thirteen years of age," who figures so conspicuously in Wodrow's romance, as she is not included in the reprieve with her elder sister, we may rest assured that she had not been condemned, and had not been tried.

It seems, however, that we are not to be allowed, without a struggle at least, the benefit of this powerful antidote, against Wodrow's poison, derived from a fuller and more accurate extract, of the public record in question, than he chose to furnish in his History. The great martyrologist of the Revolution has obtained, in our times, a clerical coadjutor, who, by a bolder step than Lord Macaulay's silence, did his best still to deprive the public of that fact, appearing as it does in the original record of the reprieve, and which is so very germain to the question of this martyrdom at Wigtown.

In a clap-trap volume, entitled "The Ladies of the Covenant," got up by "the Rev. James Anderson," in 1851, the reprieve, and the old woman's petition, are both published from the Privy Council records, and as if *verbatim*. But the reverend gentleman had silently substituted the word "Wigtown" for "Edinburgh," although the latter is perfectly distinct in the record itself, as will be seen from the following fac-simile:—



Of course this author could not afford to lose these two "Ladies of the Covenant;" so he only quotes the petition and reprieve, in order to enhance the *cruelty* of their execution, which he still holds by as an unquestionable fact. "It seems," he concludes,—following more boldly the cue of Wodrow,—"*highly probable* that our two martyrs were, by the *brutality*

of their judges, and the *magistrates of Wigtown*, executed *without orders* from the Government." The substitution of *Wigtown* for *Edinburgh* was certainly very essential to this "highly probable" argument.[1]

Here, however, it will be necessary to enter into some detail, in order to illustrate the nature and object of the Special Justiciary Commission, by which these two women were tried and condemned at Wigtown, but subsequently removed to Edinburgh, and pardoned there, after taking the Oath of Abjuration under the authority of the Privy Council. The nature of that absolving oath, and how it came to be high treason to refuse it (which was the crime for which these women had been subjected to a capital sentence), will be shewn in the following section.

SECTION IV.

Origin and object of Colonel James Douglas's Special Commission of Justiciary for the South and West of Scotland,—enduring from the 27th of March to the 21st of April 1685, under which the two women were condemned at Wigtown.

Towards the close of the year 1684 the armed Conventiclers of the south and west of Scotland were all astir in anxious expectation of Argyle's descent from Holland, whose invading army they were eager to join. On the 8th of November of that year the anonymous proclamation, entitled "The *Apologetical*

[1] Mr Anderson had still further deteriorated the value of this evidence, by omitting the fact that the old woman's petition is *formally attested by a notary public*, and not merely written by a friend. Instead of giving, or even referring to the Latin testing clause at the conclusion (a very important authentication of the document), he publishes it in this form, and under marks of quotation, as if the precise and sole authentication the petition had received:—

"Written by William Moir.

"W. Dunbar, witness.

"Will. Gordoun, witness."

Declaration," first appeared in the most alarming form. It was framed in October, drawn up by the skulking but armed conventicle leader and outlaw, James Renwick, and written with his own hand, from which copy Wodrow, with marvellous effrontery, printed it in his History. It concludes in the form of a royal proclamation, thus:—"Given at upon the 28th day of October, one thousand six hundred and eighty four years: *Let King Jesus reign, and all his enemies be scattered.*"

The Apologetical Declaration of Renwick was an outrageous repetition of the scheme of Cameron and Cargill, which had brought those "Scots Worthies" to the violent deaths they so justly met with. The renewal of it by Renwick was emboldened, to the very insanity of fanatical treason, by the murderous plots which at this time beset the Government from Holland, and the immediate prospect of Argyle's advent to seize the long coveted castle of Edinburgh for the Dutch, and eventually the Kingdom of the Covenant for himself. It was the most savage attempt to inflame the passions of the lowest classes, to incite them to murder and assassination, that ever outraged established government in a Christian country. The storm of its denunciations was directed against the highest intelligence of the land. Its *anathema maranatha* was poured out against the whole machinery, in all its departments, high and low, of law and order in a civilised state. But it shall speak for itself in the following enumeration of the objects of of its threatened vengeance:—

"Such as bloody counsellors, the members of the Justiciary Courts, generals of forces, adjutants, captains, lieutenants; *all civil or military powers* who make it their work to embrue their hands in *our blood;* or by *obeying* such commands, such as bloody militiamen, malicious troopers, soldiers and dragoons; likewise such *gentlemen and commons* who, through wickedness and ill-will, ride and run with the foresaid persons to lay search *for us*, or who deliver any of us into their hands, to the spilling of our blood, by enticing morally, or stirring up enemies to the taking away of our lives; such as designed and purposed, by advice, counsel, and encouragement, to proceed against us, wickedly, wittingly, and willingly; such as *viperous and malicious Bishops and Curates*, and all such sort of intelligencers who lay out themselves to the effusion of our blood; together with all such as, in obedience to the enemies their commands, at the *sight of us* raise the hue and cry after us,—yea, and all such as *com-*

pearing before the adversaries their Courts, upon their demands, delate us, and any who befriend us, to their and our extreme hazard and suffering. We say, *all and every one of such* shall be reputed by us *enemies of God*, and the *covenanted* work of Reformation, and *punished as such according to our power* and the degrees of their offence; chiefly if they shall continue, *after the publication of this our Declaration*, obstinately and habitually, with malice, to proceed against us *any of the foresaid ways;* not at all exonering from *present punishment* such as *formerly* have been ringleaders, and obstinate offenders," &c.

"Now, let not any think that, *our God assisting us*, we will be so *backhanded in time coming to put matters in execution* as heretofore we have been; seeing that we are bound faithfully and valiantly to maintain our Covenants and the cause of Christ," &c.

Surely death, in the shape of the hangman, was grinning over Renwick's shoulder as he penned this truculent denunciation, which brought so many, and eventually himself, to the gallows. Imagine this manifesto of treason and murder levelled against the whole civilisation—the whole moral worth and intelligence, the whole conservative machinery, of the kingdom; imagine this pasted upon the church-doors and market crosses throughout the south and west of Scotland, to be read by Christian congregations entering the house of God, and the agricultural community going about their rural occupations; and then think what the Government of the Restoration had to deal with! Nor was this a mere *brutum fulmen*, to be read and laughed at or despised. Prior to the assassination of Archbishop Sharp, the same doctrines, threats, and incentives had been anonymously published, and bore ere long that execrable fruit. "The irreligious and heterodox books called '*Napthali*' and '*Jus Populi*' (says the Lord-Advocate) had made the killing of all dissenters from Presbytery seem not only *lawful*, but even *duty*, amongst many of that profession; and, in a postscript to '*Jus Populi*,' it was told that the sending the Archbishop of St Andrews' *head* to the king would be the *best present that could be made to Jesus Christ.*"[1] Accordingly, the first manifestations of a settled purpose to murder the Primate was by a mob of "many hundreds of women" filling the Parliament Close, on the 4th of June 1674, as the Privy Council and Judges were entering the Council-Cham-

[1] Sir George Mackenzie's Memoirs of his Time.

ber, and, on pretext of presenting a petition for "*a gospel ministry,*" attacking the Primate, whom the Chancellor with some difficulty saved from these excited viragoes. "One of them," says Law, in his Memorials of the Kirk, "laid her hand upon his neck, and told him *that neck must pay for it ere all was done;* and in that guessed right."[1]

This doctrine—the lynch-law of the Kirk—became the confession of faith of the armed Conventiclers, and, indeed, was so from the dawn of Knox to the sunset of Renwick. When his proclamation appeared, followed, as forthwith it was, by practical obedience, the fate of the Primate seemed to stare every Privy-Councillor in the face. "No man," says Sir George Mackenzie in his *Vindication*, "who served the King could know whether or not his murderer was at his elbow; and they had reason to look upon *every place* as *their* scaffold, considering the violent and cruel temper of their enemies." Fountainhall, in one of his Journals of the last month of the year 1684, gives this account of Renwick's armed following: "They ridiculously keep *mock courts of justice,* and *cite* any they judge their inveterate enemies to them, and lead probation and condemn them, and afterwards *murder* them." The Lord-Register, Sir George Mackenzie of Tarbat (soon afterwards Viscount), thus reports to Queensberry, then in Dumfriesshire, by letter dated 10th November 1684:—

"This day the Secret Committee have met on occasion of a paper affixt on the cross of Lithgow, *declaring war* with the Government, and promising to *kill us all.* Since we find there is a party, declaring a war, *who lurk within us*, we think on a strict inquiry *for all in the nation* who will not *forswear* those opinions, and especially in Edinburgh, and at any rate to free the kingdom of all of them; for [hunting?] and hawking are judged absolutely insecure."

Wodrow receives no countenance for his unchristian approval of Renwick's proclamation from the Whig lawyer of the day, Fountainhall. It is highly instructive to compare his private records of it with modern Whig history on the subject.

"On the 8th of November 1684 was the Presbyterian *Declaration* (so called) affixed on sundry market-crosses and kirk-doors by the *Whigs* in

[1] These furies were very leniently dealt with—three of them only "were incarcerate for a time."—See *Memorials of Dundee*, vol. ii. p. 62.

the western shires, *threatening* that if the *curates* and *soldiers*[1] would not give over the persecuting and searching of them, but brought them still to public deaths, they would not spare to shed *their* blood by *their own measures*, seeing they could not do it now in a *legal judicative* way; and they disowned Charles Stuart to be their king; and in prosecution of this some of these *ruffians* fell in at Swyne Abbey, beside Blackburn in West Lothian, and *murdered* Thomas Kennoway and Duncan Stewart, two of the King's Life Guard, *in a most barbarous manner*. Some thought this *Whig* Declaration was but a *State invention*, set on foot by the *soldiers* to make that party odious and themselves necessary;[2] but this *convinced every one* of the *reality* of this declared war."

"20th November 1684.—The news came this morning to Edinburgh that some of the *desperate fanatics* had last night fallen in upon two of the King's Life Guards, viz., Thomas Kennoway, and Duncan Stewart, who were lying at Swyne Abbey, beyond Blackurn, in Linlithgowshire, and *murdered them most barbarously*. Whereupon the Privy Council ordained them to be searched for and pursued, if it were possible to apprehend them; and they called for Carmichael, landlord of the house, and examined him and others. *This was to execute what they had threatened in their declaration of war.*

Of course the King's Government became alarmed and excited. At ten in the morning of the same day the Lord Register writes to Queensberry in such agitation, that his letter can scarcely be deciphered:—"*For God's sake take care of yourself;* for now that these villians are at the utmost despair, they will act as *devils*, to whom they belong. I shall leave to write a long letter, which I intended, for now I think all other matters are to be left until those *wild cats* be catched." The great Whig Duke of the west,—who made these very "wild cats" his body-guard in Edinburgh in 1688, and, in conjunction with their denouncer, Tarbat, hounded them on the heroic Dundee,—was no less alarmed, as appears by his letter to Queensberry, dated Hamilton, 28th November 1684:—

"People hereabouts are much alarmed since the hearing of that *horrid murder* at Swyne Abbey; and they say the fugitives have been seen *more*

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[1] It threatened, as we have seen, a great many more than the "curates and soldiers." When Fountainhall uses the term "Whigs" it will be understood that he means the *Covenanting Conventiclers*—not all the political opponents of Government.

[2] A very silly or factious idea, for which, of course, there was not a shadow of foundation. The life-guardsmen were murdered at midnight, *in their beds.*

publicly in the remote places of this shire, since the forces went out of it, than before. Wherever I heard of any, I sent and made search for the resetters, and have several prisoners. As I wrote to General Dalzell, and now to the Chancellor, without placing several garrisons in the *moorish* places of the country, it will be hard to catch or banish *these rogues*, or find out their resetters."

Five days after the date of this letter, news came to the Privy Council, that the good and brave clergyman of Carsphairn, in Galloway, had fallen another sacrifice to Renwick's proclamation. He was murdered in his own manse, at midnight, when roused from bed by a band of these ruffians. Immediately thereafter, the same gang, suddenly augmented to a hundred and eight men in arms, stormed the Tolbooth of Kirkcudbright, killed the sentinel, released the prisoners, and carried off the town drum and all the arms they could find.

The imminent danger of the crisis, both to the lieges and the monarchy, required extraordinary measures to meet it, and the utmost energy on the part of Government. For moreover, it was well known, that all this was just a somewhat premature advanced guard of the invasion from Holland, now in secret preparation, both at home and there. Patrick Walker, the chapman of treason, (himself a murderer), states, in his fanatical biography of Peden, the miraculous priest and prophet of the conventicles,—"In April 1685, Mr George Barclay and others came to the west of Scotland, in order to *engage, preach up*, and *prepare a people to join Argyle*, who came to Scotland about the middle of May thereafter, with some men, and many notable arms." Various royal commissions were rapidly issued for rooting out these invisible Thugs; and one device of a Government almost at its wits' end against this murderous revolutionary spirit, was that *Oath of Abjuration*, which the conventicle pamphleteers and modern whig historians are so fond of denouncing, and so very shy of explicitly and fairly quoting.

Sir George Mackenzie himself tells us:—

"The Advocate being desired to raise processes against some who owned those pernicious principles, he prevailed with the Council to ask the opinion of *all the Judges* upon this *query*, viz., whether any of his Majesty's subjects, being questioned by his Majesty's *Judges* or *Commissioners*, if *they own* a late proclamation, *in so far as it does declare war against his sacred Majesty*, and *asserts*, that it is *lawful to kill* all those who are employed by his Majesty, are thereby guilty of *high treason*, and

are *art and part* of the said treasonable declaration,—*salus Populi* requiring that *every one* should contribute what was in his power to the preservation of society?"

To this public question, a Bench composed of the most humane and learned gentlemen that ever sustained the reputation of a great judicial establishment, returned a unanimous answer in the affirmative. "It is the unanimous opinion," they replied, "of the Lords of Council and Session, that a libel in the terms of the said query, is relevant to infer the crime of treason, as *art and part* of the said treasonable Declaration, against the refusers."[1] This judicial deliverance bears date the 22d of November 1684, three days after the murder of the two life-guardsmen in their beds. The *Oath of Abjuration* of 1684-5 was framed accordingly, and is as follows:—

Oath of Abjuration, 1684-5:—"I do hereby abhor, renounce, and disown, in the presence of the Almighty God, the pretended *declaration of war*, lately affixed at several parish churches, in so far as it *declares war against his sacred Majesty*, and asserts that it is *lawful to kill* such as serve his Majesty, in Church, State, army, or country, or such as act against the authors of the pretended declaration *now shown me*. And I hereby utterly renounce and disown the villanous authors thereof, who did, as they call it, *statute and ordain the same*, and what is therein mentioned. And I swear I shall never *assist* the authors of the said pretended declaration, or their emmissaries or adherents, in any point of punishing, *killing*, or *making of war*, any manner of way, as I shall answer to God." —(*Privy Council Register.*)

And this is that well abused *Abjuration Oath*, of the year 1684-5, which such historians as Charles Fox, and Lord Macaulay, with a very convenient *reticence* as to its real object, and actual terms, always forbear quoting, while they insinuate, or assume, that it was a jesuitical and scarcely intelligible test

[1] The fifteen Judges who returned this opinion were, the Earl of Perth, Chancellor; Sir David Falconer of Newton, President; Sir George Mackenzie of Tarbat, Lord-Register; Sir James Foulis of Colinton, Lord-Justice-Clerk; Sir John Lockhart, Lord Castlehill; Sir David Balfour, Lord Forret; Sir James Foulis, Lord Redford; Sir Alexander Seton, Lord Pitmedden; Sir Patrick Ogilvie, Lord Boyne; Sir Roger Hog, Lord Harcase; Sir Andrew Birnie, Lord Saline; Sir George Nicholson, Lord Kenmay; Sir Thomas Stewart, Lord Blair; Sir Patrick Lyons, Lord Carse; and John Wauchope, Lord Edmonstone.

of *religion*, pressing severely, for dear life's sake, upon the conscience of zealots, or unfairly upon the understanding of the ignorant. On the contrary, that oath was framed, after anxious judicial deliberation, expressly in reference to Renwick's Proclamation; and framed in such terms, that none but a traitor and murderer in heart and intention, if not in fact and deed, could for a moment hesitate to take it, if his mental condition were such as to qualify him to take an oath at all. The royal "Proclamation against a treasonable Declaration" of date 30th December 1684, enjoined all the lieges moving about the country to provide themselves with a legal certificate of having *abjured*, in terms of that oath, that the murderous *Thug* might not pass unseen. This stringent law, thus rendered necessary by the conduct of the conventicle leaders, was applicable to high and low, rich and poor, male and female. But, let it be borne in mind, in reference to Wodrow's calumnies, that it was expressly limited in its application to "men and women *past the age of sixteen.*"

On the 27th March 1685, a new royal Commission of Justiciary was issued by the Privy Council, for the southern and western districts, but which bore to be only in force from that date to the 20th of April thereafter, unless the term were expressly prolonged. At the head of this commission was placed the Prime Minister's brother, Colonel James Douglas of the Foot Guards. One of the special instructions under which he acted, and which had been issued at the close of the year 1684, for the direction of all the royal Commissioners, was as follows; evincing great desire on the part of the Government, even under very alarming and exciting circumstances, to act with most humane forbearance towards state criminals of the female sex:—

"2*do.* If any person *own* the principles (of Renwick's Proclamation) or *do not disown* them, they must be *judged, at least, by three.* And you must immediately give them *a libel*, and the *names of the inquest, and witnesses;* and they, *being found guilty*, are to be hanged immediately in the place, according to law. But at this time, *you are not to examine any women*, but such as have been *active*, in the said courses, *in a signal manner*, and those are to be *drowned.*"

This was an instruction, not of barbarous cruelty, but of

careful criminal justice. And, as regards women, the spirit and intention was as humane as the condition of the country could possibly admit of. However guilty, women were to be drowned, simply, and not *hanged as traitors*, or *dismembered*. And, in the month of May thereafter, the very month of the alleged public drowning of the women at Wigtown, an Act enforcing the application of the Test Act 1681, has this clause,—"It is always declared that this Act *extends not to women*." Another order of Council was, that "all *women*, imprisoned for reset and converse, or *wicked principles*, are to be *liberate* on their taking the Abjuration Oath." Now this merciful disposition of the Government, towards female delinquents, a class of rebels who had been always treated, throughout both reigns of the Restoration, with a leniency out of all proportion to the murdering zeal they too frequently displayed, is totally at variance with that story of a merciless execution of two women for no other crime than "their religion." On the other hand, the *recorded fact of their pardon*, is perfectly consistent with the whole policy of the Government, and conduct of the Executive in Scotland, at the very crisis when these women were condemned. When all these circumstances come to be known, and impartially considered, the idea, that that barbarous sacrifice, the scene of which is laid at Wigtown on the 11th of May 1685, ever occurred, seems to be rendered *morally impossible*. We shall now proceed to shew that it is *physically impossible*.

SECTION V.

How the two Wigtown Women were dealt with under Colonel Douglas's Commission of Justiciary.

In terms of the royal Commission in his favour, and under these strict but humane directions from the Privy Council, Colonel James Douglas, and the Commissioners associated with him, proceeded to hold Courts between the 27th of March,

and the 21st of April 1685, in the southern and western shires. Beyond the 20th of April, there was no power to act under that Commission. On the 21st of April, another royal Commission of Justiciary, for the same districts, was issued; at the head of which was placed General Drummond, Master-General of the Ordnance. This extinguished Colonel Douglas's jurisdiction, by its concluding clause:—

"And further, we hereby declare all *former* Commissions granted by Us, or our Privy Council, for *trying or punishing* the said crimes in the country, either to noblemen, gentlemen, or officers of our army, to be *void and extinct.* Given under our signet at Edinburgh the twenty-first day of April 1685, and of our reign the first year."

The Lord Justices for *Wigtownshire* associated with the chief commissioner Colonel Douglas, were men of high rank and position, and of different shades of politics. These were Viscount Kenmure (a notorious whig), Sir Robert Grierson of Lagg, Sir David Dunbar of Baldoon, Sir Godfrey M'Culloch of Myreton, and David Graham (the brother of Claverhouse), Sheriff-depute of Galloway. Provost Coltrane of Wigtown, who has been most virulently accused of being prominent as a merciless judge, and a cruel executioner of these alleged martyrs, was not on the Commission that tried them; and, moreover (as we shall find), was in Edinburgh, attending his Parliamentary duties there, both at the date of the trial of these women, and that of their alleged execution. The names of "Captain-Lieutenant Thomas Winram" and several other active military officers, are included in the general list (which is very voluminous) of those associated with Colonel Douglas under this Commission, who are all enjoined cordially to co-operate with him, and are placed under his orders.

While Douglas's Commission was sitting at Wigtown, two women, and *only two,* were tried and condemned to death. These were, *Margaret Lauchlison,* an old woman, stated in her petition to be "*about* the age of three-score ten years," and *Margaret Wilson,* who, in the "Cloud of Witnesses" 1714 (the *earliest* published account of the mythical romance), is called "a young woman of *scarce twenty-three* years of age," although Wodrow, Lord Macaulay, and all the modern upholders of the martyrdom, prefer, for obvious reasons, calling

her "a virgin martyr of eighteen." From the manner in which their names are coupled in covenanting history, and still more from the fact that mercy was extended to both under the same deliverance of the Privy Council, there can be no doubt that they had sinned in company, and were tried and condemned together. They could not have been very conspicuous or important rebels, as their case is entirely overlooked by all the contemporaneous chroniclers, and they first emerge, as heroines and martyrs, in the fanatical *fungi* of history, engendered by the Orange regime, between twenty and thirty years after the date of their alleged sacrifice. The nature of the charge against them we only learn from the old woman's petition. She there admits having been "justly condemned to die, by the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's most honourable Privy Council and Justiciary, in a Court held at Wigtown the 13th day of April *instant* (1685), for *not disowning that traitorous Apologetical Declaration*, lately affixed at several parish churches within this kingdom, and *refusing the Oath of Abjuration of the same.*" The petition bears no date, but must have been presented between that 13th, and the following 30th of April, the date of the reprieve in Edinburgh. And this last date, be it observed, is ten days beyond the period when the Justiciary Commission, under which they were tried and sentenced at Wigtown, is declared to have become "void and extinct," either "for trying or punishing."

Had these two women submitted, at their trial, to take the Abjuration Oath, however declamatory, and publicly violent in their treason they might have been before, they would have come under that humane order of the Privy Council, by which all *women*, charged with resetting, or following, the armed conventicle rebels, or with "wicked principles" (that is, publicly proclaiming, as such women usually did, the lynch-law of the Covenant, and treasonably disowning and vilifying the Sovereign), were, nevertheless, to be "liberated," on taking the Abjuration Oath. But they must have been very obstinate at their trial; and, indeed, previously "active in such courses in a *signal* manner" (primed and goaded to their destruction by the lurking rebel field-preachers), or, according to the orders of the Privy Council, they would not have been brought under exa-

mination at all. By the same orders, the sentence which their obstinacy, or misguided ignorance, had brought upon them, must have been sentence of death by the mitigated form of drowning. Manifestly, however, there was every desire on the part of their judges not to put that sentence into execution. The women were not ordered for immediate execution "on the place," as the instructions of the Privy Council warranted. Condemned just eight days before the expiry of that Justiciary Commission, they were allowed to petition Government. Unquestionably they were alive on the 30th of April, seventeen days after their condemnation; a fact which, in itself, is utterly subversive of the whole story of the martyrdom, namely, a *merciless* judgment, immediately followed by a *barbarous* execution. That the "*inhumanity* of *their judges*," at Wigtown, had, subsequently, effected their execution at that place, and after their special jurisdiction had expired (as some loose scribblers on the case now attempt to maintain), is manifestly nonsense on the face of it. The judges who had allowed and *furthered* their application for pardon, at a time when it was within their power and province to execute them, cannot, with any shew of reason, be imagined guilty of having lawlessly and savagely *forced on* that execution, after the appeal for mercy had been sustained at head-quarters, and the jurisdiction of those judges recalled. On the other hand, it is obvious that the judges who tried them could have done no more to save the women than what they did. The arraigned having compelled their own sentence, had become *convicts* under a decree of death, which only a higher power could reverse. To offer them the Abjuration Oath at Wigtown was *no longer within the power* of the authorities there. Condemned and sentenced under the verdict of a jury, they were out of the hands of these Lords Commissioners, and in the hands of the Privy Council. With that supreme power it now rested to say, whether the convicted were to be *allowed* to retract their defiance of the law of treason, and to have the absolving oath administered, in order that the mercy of the Crown might be extended to them.

The inevitable consequence of this state of matters was the transmission of these convicts to head-quarters, to be at the

disposal of the Privy Council. But this matter is not left merely to rational conjecture. *It is distinctly indicated in their reprieve.* It is there expressly stated, that, of date 30th April 1685, the *Magistrates of Edinburgh* (and not the Magistrates of Wigtown) are, formally, discharged from putting the sentence of death into execution. The inference that they had been removed to Edinburgh is direct and inevitable. And so plainly does this fact involve the impossibility of their having been executed *at Wigtown* on the 11th of May thereafter, that the modern Wodrow school, with whom this calumnious fable of his seems to rank as holy writ, have now, for the first time, resorted to the unwarrantable assumption, against every rational view of the evidence, that the word *Edinburgh*, appearing in the record of the reprieve, must be treated as a mistake for Wigtown, committed by the Clerk of Council. That the argument in favour of this assumption is not an easy one we may judge from the fact, that the reverend author of "The Ladies of the Covenant" adopted the daring device of taking it upon himself *tacitly* to alter the public record, so as to suit that view, rather than raise the question of clerical error. Nor would we have thought it necessary to meet that theory with more than a passing remark, were it not that the Principal of a Scotch university has recently entered the arena, and boldly fathered the crude but convenient idea.

SECTION VI.

Principal Tulloch answered.

Dr Tulloch, Vice-Chancellor and Senior Principal of St Andrews, Head of St Mary's College, and Primarius Professor of Divinity there, has come to the rescue of these Wigtown Martyrs; not indeed to save them from drowning, but to get them under water again. This heavy metal (enough to sink anything but these martyrs), has been brought to bear upon us in the periodical called "Macmillan's Magazine." Having no new materials of his own, however, to work with (against

the unwelcome light he has received from "Memorials of Dundee") Dr Tulloch has really done worse than nothing for the stranded saints of the Solway. Never, in common with all of his persuasion, having admitted or mooted a doubt as to this sensation martyrdom, until we had the honour of compelling his attention to the evidence, he now comes to the conclusion, as if a discovery of his own, that it is hard to say whether the women were drowned or not. Upon the whole, however, he inclines to the drowning. But even this feeble support, of the pet martyrdom of his church, is given under conditions so greatly modified, with so complete an abandonment of all the important outworks and embellishments of the story, judicial, executive, and dramatic, as entirely to exonerate the Restoration Government from having committed any such martyrdom, thus leaving Wodrow and Lord Macaulay's criminative romance in ruins, and his own theory, of a drowning nevertheless, if intelligible to himself, certainly not very intelligible to any of his readers. Yet the Principal is well satisfied with his own conclusion, which seems to be, that to shed no light upon the question at all, and to quarrel with the light that has been given him, is the most enlightened view of the subject that can be taken.

"We are *inclined*, therefore, to believe that the tradition rests upon a *basis* of fact, and that the women *really* suffered at Wigtown. This appears to us the conclusion of an *enlightened historical criticism*, in the view of all the circumstances of the case, and making every allowance for the *difficulties* it involves. Further light may be required to place this conclusion *beyond doubt*. But of one thing we feel *confident*, that arguments and *researches*, such as Mr Napier's, are not likely to settle this, or any historical difficulty. His industry may be *laudable*, as his ingenuity is *fertile;* but sense, impartiality, and critical sagacity, are not only *lacking* —the writer has *no perception* of such qualities. The very atmosphere of his volumes is loaded with suspicion. His prejudices and *personalities* might provoke indignation, if they did not rather excite ridicule."[1]

If we have been *personal* to the kirk historian Wodrow (which is the head and front of our offending), the Principal has repaid that personality upon our own person, with all the weight that remains with the Chair of St Andrews in the nine-

[1] Conclusion of Principal Tulloch's article on the Wigtown Martyrs, in Macmillan's Magazine for December 1862.

teenth century, and some of the virulence that characterised the field-tent of the seventeenth. But we can afford to smile at this ebullition from one who, when not borrowing his narrative from Wodrow, is weaving it from our pages; and whose own ideas on the subject, but for our arguments and our researches, would never have soared beyond the martyrologist's. Sprinkled throughout with such like pompous personalities, which scarcely serve to enliven an article turgid with the old unvouched accusations of cruelty that never existed, we cannot help comparing the Principal's paper to a prim old lady, described as possessing all the stiffness of the poker without any of its occasional warmth. It is not always easy to see through the "atmosphere" of Dr Tulloch's inconclusive verbiage; but if our volumes have succeeded in destroying what really amounts to two-thirds at least of the grounds of Wodrow's martyrological *anathemas* against the Government of the latter Stuarts, surely we are justified in our *atmospheric suspicion* as to all the rest. But we accept the challenge. We pick up the professorial gauntlet, though it be somewhat soiled.

Dr Tulloch, in the first place, endeavours to extricate Wodrow from the dilemma of having published the Privy Council record of the reprieve so partially as to deprive it of half its due weight with the public; and he is also anxious to impress upon his readers that the restoration of that important proof in "Memorials of Dundee" has no merit whatever that does not belong to Wodrow, for whom he thus pleads:—

"Wodrow's quotation is substantially the same as that given by Mr Napier in his *Appendix*,[1] although the quotation is not, as it does not pretend to be, *verbatim*. The only omission is, that the original document bears, that it is the *Magistrates of Edinburgh* who are discharged 'for putting of the sentence to execution' against the women; but however important this statement may be, there is no evidence whatever that Wodrow omitted it with any design. He simply *failed to see* the significance of it; or, more probably, passed it over altogether."

[1] In "Memorials of Dundee," vol. ii. p. 78 of *the text*, will be found a *verbatim* print of the recorded reprieve; and the whole question is fully argued and illustrated, from p. 59 to p. 99. In the Appendix (to which alone the Principal vouchsafes to refer), there is only a summary of the argument, along with a *fac-simile* of the important words which Wodrow had omitted.

That Wodrow "passed it over altogether," and that, by consequence, the fact itself had remained unfruitful for a century and a half, is just the important circumstance which we claim the merit of having brought to bear upon the question of this martyrdom. But it is not so easy to be satisfied that the wily Wodrow "simply failed to see the significance of it." None so blind as those who won't see. Neither, with the original folio edition of Wodrow's History before us, can we concede, that his quotation from the Register "does not pretend to be *verbatim*." Every line of his extract is pointedly given under marks of quotation, to distinguish it from the rest of his text; and he prefaces it by saying,—"In the Council Register, since I wrote what is above, *I find what follows.*" Nothing short of inspecting the Register itself, which was then in private hands,[1] and not accessible to the public, or to ordinary research, could have informed Wodrow's readers that he had not given them a complete and *verbatim* extract. Dr Tulloch's next hit is still less happy. He goes so far as to say, that this decided indication, in the Register of Privy Council, that these convicts had been removed to Edinburgh, does not amount even to "a particle of evidence" of that fact!

"Yet there is not a particle of evidence that the women were removed to Edinburgh. They were, by the evidence of the elder woman's petition, in the '*Tolbooth of Wigtown*' some time after their sentence on the 13th of April. The expression, 'Magistrates of Edinburgh,' we *cannot help thinking*, is a *clerical error*, the mark of a hasty, *concocted*, and *incomplete* document. What could have been the *use* of *dragging* the two poor women to Edinburgh, especially as, according to the theory which supposes them transported there, they had both already *abjured their crimes*, and applied for pardon."

All this is crude and confused; the hasty production of a

[1] In a letter addressed to the "Rev. Mr John M'Bride, minister of Belfast," dated June 21, 1715, Wodrow writes, in reference to the rise and progress of his History,—"When I went in to the Assembly, I very luckily fell upon the Registers of our Privy Council, *in the hands of a private person*, and there, indeed, I met with a *black scene*." This is a true statement of how he got at the records of the fallen dynasty, but not a true account of what he found there. If the whole of those Privy Council *Acta* and *Decreta* were published, excellent materials would be thereby afforded for a defence of the Governments of the Restoration against the calumnies of Wodrow.

mind unripe on the subject, and not at all willing to be ripened. But even the Head of a College cannot throw light upon such a question as this without taking a little more trouble to understand it, and to be accurate and precise, instead of angry and personal. Of course the women were in the "*Tolbooth of Wigtown*" when their petition was preparing, immediately after their sentence there. But how does that fact affect the other fact, of their having been removed to Edinburgh, after they had petitioned the Privy Council to grant warrant to have the Abjuration Oath administered to them under an authority which the Court that had condemned them no longer possessed? Moreover, the question was, not whether they had "abjured *their crimes.*" They had defied the law, the King, and the Government, by refusing to take the *Abjuration Oath* against Renwick's treasonable proclamation, and had therefore been condemned to death for high treason. They had *abjured nothing* at Wigtown. Nor could they, after condemnation. But they petitioned the Privy Council *to be allowed to do so*, though dead in law. There was every use and reason for their being removed to Edinburgh, a very common occurrence under the circumstances, and one which Dr Tulloch cannot deprive of its likelihood by his verbiage of "dragging." Doubtless the poor women went most willingly. It was following out the object of their own petition, and assuredly was much more to their taste than to be dragged into the water at Wigtown, in *immediate* fulfilment of their sentence, as the story of this martyrdom pretends.

And here we must take the liberty to point out, that that loose mode of considering these convicts as having "already abjured their crimes," has caused Dr Tulloch not to see a most important piece of evidence, afforded by this record of the reprieve, that cuts the whole ground from under both Wodrow and Lord Macaulay. The martyrologist tells us, that the "maiden of eighteen" could, by no entreaty of friends, either during her imprisonment, trial, or execution, be brought to take the Abjuration Oath, "but stood fast in her *integrity*, and would not be shaken." Lord Macaulay's eloquent climax is also entirely dependent upon that assumption in the romance: "Will she *take the Abjuration?* he demanded. 'Never,' she

exclaimed, ' I am Christ's, let me go,'—and the waters closed over her for the last time." Unfortunately for this flourish, the record of the reprieve affords evidence, irresistible, that both of them *had taken* the Oath of Abjuration. The old woman's petition expressly *prays to be allowed to take it;* and that they had both actually taken it, after having been condemned to death for refusing to take it, is placed beyond doubt or cavil by the terms, and by the fact, of the reprieve itself. The Lords of the Privy Council, including the Lord Advocate, " recommend the said *Margaret Wilson* and *Margaret Lauchlison* to the Lords Secretaries of State, to interpose with his most sacred Majesty for the royal remission to them." Why? Because both had *now taken* the Abjuration Oath. It could not have been otherwise. They had been condemned to die for obstinately refusing that absolving oath. Is it possible that their free pardon would have been, thus unconditionally, and in simple unqualified terms, recommended to the Crown by the Privy Council, the women still obstinately refusing to take it? Could that recommendation, made in such terms, have occurred under any other state of the case than this, that both convicts had now, contritely, come in the King's will (as, indeed, the old woman's petition expressly intimates), and *taken the oath at last?* Nor would they themselves have petitioned for mercy at all, if still in the fanatical mood of refusing to take that oath. There is no rational theory, by which other conclusion can be come to in the matter, than this, that both of these pardoned convicts had taken the Oath of Abjuration between the date of their trial, 13th April, and the date of their reprieve, the 30th of the same month. But the Principal says he cannot help *thinking*, that the word *Edinburgh*, in the record of the reprieve, is a clerical error for *Wigtown*. The wish, we suspect, is father to that thought. Doubtless there are clerical errors to be met with in the Privy Council Register, as in other old records of a like voluminous nature. We shall presently have occasion to point out a mistake of the kind; the only one, however, falling under our own observation in searching this Register. But the occurrence of any obvious, or *proved* clerical error, is no excuse whatever for *assuming* such error, where there is neither

proof, nor *ex facie* indication to authorise the idea. The question here is, had these women been removed to Edinburgh, after petitioning the Privy Council to be *allowed* to retract the treasonable obstinacy under which the verdict of guilty had been pronounced against them, and to take the Abjuration Oath notwithstanding? And as removal to Edinburgh, instead of being strange and improbable, was the most likely thing to happen under the circumstances, must we *imagine* a clerical error in a fairly written public record, for no better reason than to bolster up a wild romance, most improbable in all its details, and for the truth of which not a particle of contemporaneous or legitimate evidence has ever transpired? Were it *proved*, indeed, that these two women suffered at Wigtown as narrated by Wodrow, "Edinburgh" must necessarily be assumed as a clerical error for Wigtown; because if executed there, under the jurisdiction of the Magistrates of Wigtown, they could not well be supposed to have been removed to head-quarters, so as to have come under the executive jurisdiction of the Magistrates of Edinburgh. But there being not a vestige of *proof* discovered (for contradictory fanatical tradition is anything but proof), that these women ever were executed,—on the contrary, the proof being *all the other way*,—to *think* that "Edinburgh," occurring in the Register *must* be a clerical error for Wigtown, is a thought without a shadow of reason to justify it, and not to be reconciled with that understanding of the case which can be shown to rest upon the most legitimate contemporaneous evidence, both positive and negative. Indeed so irresistible is the whole proof, that these women were not drowned at Wigtown as narrated, and so probable is their removal to Edinburgh, there to take the Oath of Abjuration, that supposing the word *Wigtown* to have been found in that record of the reprieve, the theory, that it was a clerical error for *Edinburgh*, would have been a more *legitimate* conjecture, to which the rational mind might have been driven by the nature of the proof in the case. That word, on the other hand, being found in the Register which best quadrates with all the ascertained facts, why should the Head of a College be constrained to think that it was a mistake for another word having no coherence or congruity whatever with the

proved facts of the case? But we shall now furnish Dr Tulloch with additional materials for dissipating that somewhat misty thought.

The two Wigtown women were not the only criminals pardoned by the Government after having been condemned to death under Colonel Douglas' Justiciary Commission. He had held his Court at *Cumnock*, in the neighbouring shire of Ayr, *immediately before* sitting at Wigtown, and had there condemned *three men* to death, as appears by the following entries in the Privy Council Register:—

"9th April, 1685.—The Lord Commissioner his Grace having acquainted the Councill of ane addresse made by Allen Aitken, indweller in Cumnock, John Pearson, taillior there, and James Meason, taillior in Ochiltree,[1] *sentenced to die* upon the twentie day of Aprile *instant*, in a Court *held by Colonel James Douglas*, Colonel of his Majestie's Regiment of Foot Guards, for *concealing and not revealing of these rebels who lately went through some Western shires*, whereby they acknowledge their great ignorance, error, and fault, and cast themselves upon the King's mercy, and are content to *take any oaths* or obligations by law appointed, as evidence of their abhorrence of their former practices, and a testimonie of their future good behaviour, and desyreing his Grace will grant them a reprive for some time, that application might be made to his sacred Majestie for a remission to them; which addresse being read in Councill, the Lord Commissioner his Grace hath reprived, and hereby repriveth the execution of the foresaid sentence of death, untill the twentieth day of May next, at which time the same to be put in execution, in caise there be no furder order to the contraire."

Meanwhile these convicts had been removed to the *Tolbooth in Edinburgh*, to await the issue, as appears by the next entry, and had *there taken the Abjuration Oath.*

"8th May, 1685.—The Lords of his Majestie's Privy Councill, having considered the petition of James Naiper, Allan Aitken, and John Pearson, *now prisoners in the Tolbooth of the Canongate* sentenced to death by the Commissioners, appointed by the Councill, at *Cumnock*, for alleged resett, and corresponding with rebells, and thereafter, upon a former bill repryved till the twentieth of this instant, Doe hereby reprive the said James Naiper, Allan Aitken, and John Pearson, till furder order;

[1] Here, undoubtedly, is a clerical error in the Register; which, however, is made manifest, and *corrected*, by the subsequent entries. "James *Meason*, *taillior* in Ochiltree," is a blunder, for "James *Napper*, *mason* in Ochiltree," as it is written afterwards. The source of the error is manifest.

and ordains a letter to be writ in their favors, to the Lords Secretaries of State, recommending them to interpose with his sacred Majestie, for his royall remission to the forenamed persons, *in regard they have taken the Oath of Abjuration*, and hath purged themselves on oath as to the alledged resett or harbour of rebells, except what was accidentall."

The next entry relating to these men is dated the 5th of June, and that order, it will be observed, "discharges the Magistrates of *Edinburgh* to put the said sentence in execution," precisely as they were discharged on the 30th of April, in the case of the women sent from Wigtown.

"5th June, 1685.—The Lords of his Majestie's Privy Councill, haveing considered ane address made to them by Allan Aitken in Cumnock, John Pearson, taillour there, and James Napper, mason in Ochiltree, *sentenced by Colonel Douglas to die*, and the Councill haveing, upon the nynth day of Aprile last, upon ane address made by the saids persons, did [*sic*] reprive the sentence of death pronounced against them, to the twentieth day of June *instant*, desyreing that the forsaid sentence might be continowed for some longer time, that application might be made to his most sacred Majestie for his royall remission, *in regaird they have sworn and subscrived the oath of the test*, doe hereby reprive the execution of the said sentence untill the first Friday of December next, and in the mean tyme *discharges the Magistrates of Edinburgh* to put the said sentence in execution; but to continow the saids persons in prison untill the said day; and ordains a letter to be writt to the Lords Secretaries of State to interpose with his sacred Majesty for his gracious remission to them, for their life only.

"Follows the *tenor* of the letter direct to the Lords Secretaries in favors of the said three persons:—

"My Lords,—

"There being ane address made to the Lords of Privy Councill, by Allan Aitken in Cumnock, John Peirson, taillour there, and James Napper, mason in Ochiltree, sentenced by Colonell Douglas to dy, for concealing and not revealing of these rebells who went through some Western shires *in armes*, whereby they acknowledge their great ignorance, error and cryme, and cast themselves upon the King's mercy, desyreing that the execution of the said sentance might be reprived for such competent time as that application may be made for them to his sacred Majesty for his gracious remission to them, for their lifes only, to be expede the several offices *gratis*. The Council have thought fitt, in regaird of the penitence of the saids three persons, and that they *have sworn and subscrived the oath of the test*, to repryve the execution of the said sentance untill December next; and in the mean tyme to recommend to your Lordships to interpose with the King's Majestie for a remission to them, for their lives only, to be passed through the severall offices *gratis*, because *of their known poverty and indigency*. This in name of the Councill is

signified to your Lordships by, my Lords, your Lordships' most humble servant, *sic subscribitur*, PERTH, *Cancell:* I. P. D."

The next order on the subject, is dated on the last day of June, from which it appears that the royal confirmation, of the pardon by the Privy Council, had arrived of that date.

"Last day of June, 1685.—His Majestie's remission to Allan Aitken, John Peirson, and James Naipper, who was accessory to the rebellion of Bothwell Bridge, being produced by the Lord High Chancellor, *Ordered*, that the same be delivered to the King's Sollicitors to be by them exped the severall offices *gratis*, conform to the tenor thereof." [1]

Here, then, is further evidence of humane dispositions, and humane dealing, both on the part of the Lords Commissioners of Justiciary, and of the Privy Council. The case of the Cumnock men was of far more importance, and consequently of more dubiety as to the question of pardon, than that of the Wigtown women. Accordingly, the entries in the Register, relating to the male rebels are more frequent, and much fuller, than what appears relative to the women. In the latter case, the day appointed for their execution at Wigtown is not mentioned. And no day is appointed for their *contingent* execution under the jurisdiction of the Magistrates of Edinburgh. They are reprieved *sine die*, as if their pardon was certain. Nor was it possible, under the circumstances, that their remission would be refused by the Crown. In other respects, and as regards the removal to Edinburgh, the case of the Wigtown women was just, *mutatis mutandis*, the case of the Cumnock men. These last had been escorted to Edinburgh, of some date between the 9th of April and the 8th of May. The women must have been removed on some day between the 13th and the 30th of April. Now, *between these two last dates* is just the most probable period within which the men had been removed, seeing that the *first* consideration of their petition by the Privy Council is dated the 9th of April, and they were certainly in Edinburgh before the 8th of May. Can we doubt that the whole of these petitioning convicts, men and women,

[1] We have not been able to discover in the Register-House any official register of the remission by the Crown, either in the case of the men or the women. But the confirmation was matter of course, especially as regards the case of the women.

were transmitted to head-quarters under the same escort? Their cases being precisely similar, as regards their position with Government, all and each of them having been condemned about the same time, in nearly the same locality, under the same Justiciary Commission, are we to believe, and in the face of the public record indicating the contrary, that the petitioning women were retained in Wigtown at the very time when the petitioning men were escorted from Cumnock? Or will Dr Tulloch still be constrained to think that the word *Edinburgh*, in like manner occurring in the reprieve of the men, is a clerical error for *Cumnock?*

But the Senior Principal of St Andrews (in whose presence we have never happened to stand), though weak in research, and weaker in argument, is strong in reproof. He twaddles over the martyrs, but he thunders upon us. *Ex cathedra*, he pronounces us to be a sort of literary *Lagg*. Drawing a severe distinction, he says we not merely *lack* sense, impartiality, and critical sagacity, but have *no perception* of such qualities. The fatherly object of the Principal is to teach us the courtesies of criticism, and the politeness of polemics. So he tells us that we are only saved from provoking indignation by our exciting ridicule; and that our Memorials of Dundee are written in "a spirit which we can scarcely trust ourselves to criticise, *so absolutely is it beneath*, not to say the dignity of history, but *the courtesies of any species of literature whatever!*"

In redeeming Montrose and Dundee, from Presbyterian calumnies in which courtesy never formed an ingredient, we were not writing history, but exposing falsehood. We made no attempt to dress by the purists in historical composition, being too busy detecting the calumnies of history to think of exemplifying the dignity of her march.* Coming into collision with the falsest and least dignified of historians, we did not seek to fashion a single phrase to that mincing, and more marketable, mode of half-complimentary dislike, which, sacrificing the expression of a just indignation to a timid rather than a fastidious taste, fears to call a spade a spade. Still we were scrupulous in obeying that golden rule of history, to be no less fearful of recording falsehood, than fearless in exposing it.

Accordingly, upon a searching investigation of Wodrow's merits as a martyrologist, after tracing, through his own correspondence and collections, the rise and progress of his History of the Sufferings of the Kirk, the spirit of its conception, the trick of its composition, and the sources of its information, we came to a conscientious conclusion, that Wodrow was "a superficial fanatic,"—and we *called him so.* Again, when we tracked him through his unmeasured and interminable calumnies against all the highest personages in the realm; when we found him accusing the great Dundee of the most brutal crimes; viz., that he permitted his troopers to violate matrons in presence of their husbands; that he tortured to death harmless herd boys, by screwing cords round their heads into their brains; that he slaughtered with his own hand a pious, industrious peasant, so innocent of all offence that fiendish troopers mutinied on the spot against the murderous order of their commander; when we found Wodrow accusing Charles, sixth Earl of Home, a nobleman of the highest character, of torturing, *ex proprio motu*, and without the indispensable authority of the Privy Council, two innocent brothers, by what the martyrologist terms "the now ordinary torture of lighted matches betwixt their fingers," because they refused to tell him whether they kept the church; when we found him chuckling over the murder of Archbishop Sharp, and then accusing that worthy and Christian Prelate of having strangled an illegitimate infant of his own, and buried it under the hearth-stone; and when we discovered that all this could be proved to be as infamously false as if the prince of liars had whispered it into his ear, we came to the conclusion, and it was a just conclusion, that Wodrow was "foul-mouthed," that he was "a low-minded Scotch dominie" of his time, that the chief sources of his annals were "feculent,"—and *we said so.* Moreover, when we came to study his voluminous *Analecta*, or "Remarkable Providences chiefly relating to Scotch ministers;" when we there found him solemnly asserting that a dead child, which had been buried, pointed out its murderer with its own raised finger; that a dead woman, in her grave-clothes, sat up in bed, and, discoursing with those who watched the body, told them of the punishment she was already enduring

in the "flames of hell;" that Archbishop Sharp was discovered by his own domestics closeted with the Devil himself, and in earnest conversation with him; that Satan, assuming the appearance of a sailor who was at sea, habitually slept with the sailor's wife, but at length "*gave her a nip*, and vanished," from which nip she suffered so cruelly "that the *minister* of the place, and some others, *are much concerned for her;*" when we found his vast collection of "remarkable providences" composed of such perilous stuff as this, we came to the conclusion, surely not unreasonable, that Wodrow was "a vulgar glutton of coarse and canting gossip,"—and *we called him so.* And, worse than all, forming this estimate of Wodrow upon these grounds, we dared to sum up with the indignant question, whether the savage and low-minded cruelties, of which the martyrologist accuses him, "is to be believed against *such a man* as Dundee, upon the sole and unsupported authority of *such an idiot* as Wodrow?"

Hinc illæ lacrymæ. Culling from three octavo volumes every severe expression against the martyrologist he could light upon, isolating them entirely from the context, and stringing these peppercorns all together, the Principal offers this, his own angry *conglomerate*, as a fair specimen of our well spiced *pudding*, and calls it "*delirious* abuse." Such, he says, (with another terrible flourish of the Professorial birch), "are the choice epithets which Mr Napier, *gentleman* and *advocate*, hurls at the head of the Covenanting historian." This sort of thunder may serve to shake the ruins of St Andrews, but moves not us. We fear not that it will affect our character as a *gentleman*, and we defy it to injure our practice as an *advocate.* But our difficulty is to discover, from this paper of his, that Dr Tulloch, with all his academic titles, is himself very highly qualified to read us a lecture, either on the solidities of sense, or the polish of politeness,—in logic, in criticism, or in courtesy. There is not an epithet we have applied to the martyrologist, that is not fully justified by the occasion, and justified in our context. There are occasions, moreover, (and what we had to deal with is one of them), when to oppose the energy of truthful indignation, to the virulence of false accusations, is at once the duty of an *advocate*, and the

part of a *gentleman*. In that latter attribute, especially, we decline the tuition of Macmillan's clerical correspondent. And as for "delirious abuse," we would rather be delirious in the cause of the truth and justice of history, than dogged and dull in opposition to it.

SECTION VII.

The evidence derived from the Records of the Privy Council, that the Wigtown women were pardoned in Edinburgh, and not drowned at Wigtown, corroborated by the Record of that Royal Burgh.

Conclusive as we have shewn the evidence to be, against the Wigtown martyrdom, derived from the records of the Privy Council, we do not intend to leave it without the important corroborations with which, as might be expected, various other authentic sources of the truth in such matters have rewarded a careful investigation.

No record, or minutes, of these special Justiciary Circuits, perambulating the disturbed districts of Scotland, in 1684 and 1685, have been discovered. But it occurred to the author of these pages to institute some inquiry about the Burgh records of *Wigtown;* and the fortunate result, after a little research, was the disinterment from some grave of a repository of the tattered remains of a volume of those records, embracing the very year of the alleged Solway tragedy. As regards that year, 1685, however, the volume happens to be perfectly entire. Now, in that record, *no trace of this martyrdom, nor of the names of the martyrs,* is to be met with. There is no entry whatever, of any sederunt of the Town Council, or the Burgh Court, during the month of May 1685. On the 15th of April, of that year, "John Malroy, hangman," is called before the Council, who question him as to "what was his reason to absent himself at this time, when there was employment for him?" This date is the second day after that on which Margaret Wil-

son and Margaret Lauchlison were tried and condemned at Wigtown; and fourteen days prior to the date of the record of their reprieve at Edinburgh. The hangman "acknowledged he was in the wrong, and was *seduced* thereto, but now acknowledges that he is the town's servant, and promised to bide by his service; but alleges that he had no benefit or salary for his service, and craved to have some allowance for time coming, which he referred to the Town Council at ane frequent meeting *after the Provost returned from Edinburgh.*" Meanwhile, during the Provost's absence, the Council appoint their Treasurer to allow the hangman four shillings *Scots*, daily, "during his abode in prison."

As the women in question had not been tried in the Burgh Court, of course we had no expectation of finding in those books any judicial record of their *trial and sentence.* But when a Royal Burgh is charged with the execution of criminals, there are certain expenses consequent upon that disagreeable duty, which necessarily enter their books, in accounting with their Treasurer. Thus we found the whole items of the expense of executing the Marquis of Montrose, even to the price of the nails for the scaffold, detailed in the Burgh books of Edinburgh. And most assuredly had the Magistrates of Wigtown been charged with the execution of these two women, and that execution had taken place, the necessary disbursements would have entered their accounts, and been noticed in their books. Considerable expense would have attended such a drowning scene as that described by the fanatical romancers; and the fact that no single item, indicating that any expense of the kind had been incurred by the Magistrates of Wigtown, amounts to excellent *negative* evidence that no such execution occurred there. This *Burgh Record*, then, affords a *complete corroboration* of the history of these State criminals, as we trace it in the records of the Privy Council.

Not only, however, is the scene of the execution laid at Wigtown, but the Provost of the Burgh, William Coltran of Drummoral, has hitherto always been made to figure as the presiding evil genius at the virgin sacrifice. Wodrow (in utter ignorance of all the facts) asserts that the trial occurred in the month of *May* 1685 (an assertion *disproved* by the old woman's

petition), and that the execution was forthwith ordered to proceed "upon the 11th *instant.*" He says that the two women, and the child "not thirteen," were "brought to their trial before the Laird of Lagg, Colonel David Graham, Sheriff, Major Windram, and *Provost Cultrain,* who gave *all the three* an indictment for rebellion," &c. The "Cloud of Witnesses" (1714), whose rude and confused narrative Wodrow both copies, and materially alters, has the same story. The reverend author of "Ladies of the Covenant," informs us, that "Provost Cultrain of Wigtown was a very active instrument," in the death of these two martyrs. And, as we shall afterwards find, (from Wodrow's correspondence), the *ghost* of Margaret Lauchlison actually appeared to warn that murderous Chief Magistrate that he was on the eve of being called to his great account, for his cruelty to herself while in the flesh. Now, in the face of all this rubbish, which has so long debased the Church History of Scotland, these Burgh Records of Wigtown prove, beyond all question, that the Provost of Wigtown, during the whole period of his alleged activity in promoting this terrible martyrdom there, was actually at head-quarters in Edinburgh, attending his Parliamentary duties, as Commissioner for the Royal Burgh! While there, doubtless he would be in communication with the Government, on the subject of the petition for mercy, and must have been instrumental in obtaining the pardon for these women, instead of presiding at their execution. But to this important discovery we shall have occasion to recur, in the second part of the present investigation. Meanwhile we proceed to another corroboration, of these public records, of a still more conclusive character.

SECTION VIII.

The evidence of the Public Records against the truth of the drowning drama at Wigtown, corroborated by the contemporaneous and positive testimony of the Lord Advocate, Sir George Mackenzie.

Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh was Lord Advocate during the reigns both of Charles II. and James II. His official position alone occasioned the rancorous abuse poured out against him in the feculent annals of the Covenant. This refined and highly accomplished gentleman performed the functions of his laborious, and terribly responsible office, with a humanity, under the most trying circumstances, that was equal to his firmness. After the death of his dear friend Dundee, in 1689, and the crowning of King William, he sought, for a time, repose and shelter among the monks of Oxford, and devoted himself to his beloved letters. But he did not long survive. He died, somewhat suddenly, in his lodgings in St·James' Street, London, on the 8th of May 1691. The last act of his life, the last exercise of his able pen, was to vindicate himself, and the Government he had served so well, from the unscrupulous accusations of the anonymous pamphleteering Cameronians. A few months after his death, there was published in London, in the usual small quarto form of the pamplets of the day, "A Vindication of the Government in Scotland during the reign of King Charles II., against misrepresentations made in several scandalous pamphlets, &c.: By Sir George Mackenzie, late Lord Advocate there." This bears to have been "licensed September 19, 1691," four months after his death. In that succinct and most temperate vindication, the following remarkable passage occurs. The italics are as they appear in the pamphlet itself:—

"There were, indeed, two women executed, and *but two in* both these reigns, and they were punished for most heinous crimes which no sex should defend. Their crimes were, that they had receipted, and entertained, for many months together, *the murtherers of the Archbishop of St*

Andrews, who were likewise *condemned traitors* for having been openly in rebellion at *Bothwell Bridge;* whereupon they having been prosecuted, declined the King's authority, *as being an enemy to God, and the Devil's vicegerent.* And though a pardon was offered to them upon their repentance, they were so far from accepting it, that they owned the crimes to be duties; and our accusers should remember that these women were executed for higher crimes than the following Montrose's camp, for which *fourscore women and children* were drowned, being all in one day thrown over the bridge at *Linlithgow* by the Covenanters, and six more at *Elgin* by the same faction, all without sentence, or the least formality of law." —(*Vindication*, p. 20.) [1]

The importance of this evidence cannot be exaggerated. A more conclusive extinguisher, even taken by itself, of the story of the execution of the women at Wigtown, cannot well be conceived. What does it amount to? A direct and emphatic declaration, by that high official who was public prosecutor during the reigns of Charles and James,—his dying declaration, it may be called,—that throughout the whole reign of the latter monarch, in the fourth month of whose reign the drowning of these two women, for high treason, is said to have occurred, *no female State prisoner whatever* suffered the last

[1] George Ridpath (a fanatical newsmonger in London, and Wodrow's adviser and correspondent) wrote, anonymously, that grossly indecent and scandalous tract, called an "Answer to the Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence," published in London, 1693. He there speaks (p. 27) of "the knavish Prelatist who got Sir George Mackenzie to *rob* one that had given *three guineas* for a stolen copy (of the *Vindication*), under a pretence that he (Sir George) would not have it published, and yet printed it himself *after Sir George's death*." This would seem to be pointed at Dundee's accomplished friend and eulogist, Dr Monro, the persecuted Principal of Edinburgh College, who is known to be the author of a tract, entitled "An Apology for the Clergy of Scotland," &c., also published in London in 1693; and in which he replies to Ridpath—"It is a lye that Sir George Mackenzie pretended he would not publish it, though he would not allow a copy *surreptitiously procured* to come abroad *without his immediate orders and directions;* and when he saw it convenient, he recommended it to *his friend* [Dr Monro] to publish it; and it might have been printed *a good while before he died*, if the *publisher* had not been diverted by many little occurrences. The original copy written by Mr Andrew Johnstone, then amanuensis to Sir George Mackenzie, is still in the publisher's hands." It was necessary to note this, as some angry scribblers in the newspapers have recently pretended that there is no evidence that the "Vindication" was written by Sir George Mackenzie.

punishment of the law. For there can be no doubt as to who were the two women, the "*but two,*" whom Sir George so circumstantially records (although he does not name them), as the only sufferers, of that kind, during the whole course of the reigns of the Restoration. These were *Isobel Alison* and *Marion Harvey*, who were hanged together in the Grass-market of Edinburgh on the 26th of January 1681, in the reign of Charles II.[1] The trial for high treason, of these violent and dangerous women, was conducted in the most moderate spirit by Sir George Mackenzie in person, who did what he could to save them from their own insane excitement, goaded to their deaths by the lurking conventicle preachers. Now the justice and necessity of that public example, in that *solitary* instance of such an example occurring during the whole period of the Restoration, is fairly and fully admitted by his Whig opponent, Fountainhall, whose record and remarks upon the case are very ample.

In the second part of this investigation we shall show how it happened that the ex-Lord Advocate came to make that explicit and emphatic declaration. Meanwhile it will be observed, that this is really tantamount to a *direct declaration*, by the highest authority, that no execution, by any form, of any State criminal whatever, of the female sex, occurred in Scotland in the reign of James II. It is very remarkable that this conclusive evidence should hitherto have escaped observation, and never have been used to shake the credit of this mythical martyrdom, until we so used it in our Memorials of Dundee. But

[1] The identification is placed beyond question by a comparison of Sir George Mackenzie's statement, with the indictment against these two women, and record of the proceedings against them, in the books of the High Court of Justiciary, and also with Fountainhall's account of their case. Sir George's statement will not apply to the case of the *Wigtown* women, who had nothing to do with resetting the murderers of Archbishop Sharp; and there is no case which the Advocate *could* mean, other than that of the notorious one of *Isobel Alison* and *Marion Harvey*, which he conducted in person, and could not by possibility have omitted. It was necessary to note this, as Dr Tulloch (continually pressing his want of knowledge of the subject into the service of his argument) seems inclined to throw doubt upon what can only be doubted by those who have not looked closely at it.

let us see the effect it has had upon the martyrological faith of the Head of a Presbyterian College:—

"As to the *negative* evidence of Sir George Mackenzie and Lord Fountainhall, *we cannot attach much importance to either.* It was Sir George's *interest* to make the best case for the Government whose servant he had been. It is *perfectly possible*, that the Wigtown martyrdom may have happened *while he never heard of it.* The same remark applies to Lord Fountainhall. The *martyrdom* was *provincial*, and not metropolitan, like the execution of the two women to whom he refers, and of whom Sir George Mackenzie is also *supposed* to speak. It was not the *regular act of the Government* (the fact of the reprieve may be allowed *so far* in exoneration), but a high-handed outrage by its *provincial agents.* Nothing is *more likely* than that such an event happening in a *remote* part of Scotland, and when the means of communication were tardy beyond our present conception, did not *directly reach* either of these authorities in Scotland."—*(Paper in Macmillan's Magazine.)*

Here, surely, is some slight deficiency in what the Principal terms "perception of the quality of sense." He argues, that the Lord Advocate of the Troubles, when writing his "Vindication" in 1690, might be altogether ignorant of the notorious (if true) instance of this martyrdom at Wigtown in 1685, *because* it happened in "a *remote* part of Scotland, and when the means of communication were tardy beyond our present conception." And would that reason really account for the fact, that a "high-handed outrage by provincial agents,"—an outrage involving the murder of two pardoned females, an outrage against the humane forbearance of the Lords Commissioners of Justiciary, against the merciful decree of the whole Privy Council of Scotland, judicial and executive, against the highest prerogative of the Crown,—had never reached the ear of the first law officer of the Crown (himself one of the Privy Councillors on the sederunt that reprieved the women), even after the lapse of *five years* from the time when that unparalleled outrage is said to have been perpetrated at the royal burgh of Wigtown? But besides the incoherence of the logic, the reason is altogether futile in itself.

In reference to communication with the Government in Edinburgh, Wigtown cannot be called "a remote part of Scotland." It was the most closely watched, and strictly commanded, of the troubled districts. It was about the centre of

the rebellion in the south. It was the dangerous capital of the Dalrymples. It was ever kept tightly in hand. The Government were in continual and anxious communication with it. The *Whig* Lord Kenmure was the leading Commissioner for the peace in that quarter. In that Royal Commission he was associated with, (and in politics opposed to), such prominent lairds as Sir Robert Grierson of Lagg, Sir David Dunbar of Baldoon, Sir Godfrey M'Culloch of Myreton, and David Graham the Sheriff-depute. The chief magistrate of Wigtown, William Coltran of Drummoral, was Commissioner to the Parliament for that royal burgh, and was in his place in Parliament, and in communication with the Government at the very time when this alleged "high-handed outrage" was perpetrated at Wigtown. To suppose that the news of such an outrage as this (if such were conceivable) would not have reached the Privy Council and the Provost of the outraged Burgh in the course of a very few days, and have acquired publicity, and created vast excitement over all Scotland in a few weeks, argues a total want of knowledge of the state of public affairs, and of the nature and resources of Government during the period in question. That the celerity and certainty of postal communication, and the powers of locomotion, which exist now did not exist then, we need not be told. But that, in the troubled reigns of the Restoration, there was neither celerity nor certainty of communication between the great stations of Government, however distant from each other, in matters of State importance, in exigencies of vital consequence to the peace of the country and the lives of the lieges, is an idea so *jejune* as to startle us, emanating as it does from the most ancient seat of learning in Scotland. Doubtless, old people can still amuse us with their stories of snail-like progress, and postal failures, where now railway and telegram outstrip the wind, and of dangers and distresses on rugged highways now unconscious of a rut. But nothing can be more fallacious than to argue, from such reminiscences, that all the powers and resources of rapid locomotion on land must have been nearly at a stand-still in Scotland in 1685. There was not only the ordinary post, but the "flying post" between London and Edinburgh, and that flew in five days. In Scot-

land, expresses were running in every direction wherever rapid communication with the Government required to be kept up. When Claverhouse, in 1679, was sent to redeem matters in the south and west, the first thing he did was to organise dragoon expresses twice a week, Monday and Thursday, between and headquarters, which were both rapid and sure, as his voluminous correspondence sufficiently proves. After the Restoration the postal system was greatly improved, and well and extensively established between Edinburgh and the south and west of Scotland. It would be easy to prove by examples that the knowledge in the metropolis of any occurrence of public importance in Galloway was, at that time, a matter of very few days. But again we say, what has the theory of slow travelling to do with the question of Sir George Mackenzie's knowledge in 1690, of a very awful public outrage occurring *anywhere* in Scotland in 1685?

In a breath, with this argument, the Principal wields another, although the two cannot well stand together. He says, delivering a broadside on the opposite tack, that the ex-Lord Advocate *did know* all about the Wigtown martyrdom, but that he had *wilfully* suppressed that instance in his "Vindication," *because* "it was Sir George's *interest* to make the best case he could for the Government whose servant he had been." At that rate, he might have made a better case still, by suppressing the Grass-market martyrdom too. This touches the question of "perception of the quality of *critical sagacity*." Sir George Mackenzie was a high-minded and very accomplished man. He pre-eminently fulfilled that character, from which the Principal seems to say we have lapsed, "*gentleman* and *advocate*." Moreover, he was one of the most astute statesmen of his day. Irrespective of the moral question, how would the object of his "Vindication" have been served, by a dishonest suppression of that which could not be concealed? If ever there was a case in which honesty was the best policy, it was here. The *quartett* of female martyrs would have been just as efficient for his general argument as the *duet*. Sir George had retired for ever from public life, was entirely withdrawn from the scene, and could have no motive whatever for undertaking to write any defence of the Government, except the strong con-

sciousness of being able to place the *truth* against what he well knew to be, and indignantly calls, "many dreadful lies." And, in the very jubilee of the Orange accession, was there no one to detect, and answer, this great official of the fallen dynasty, if he had perilled that very particular statement upon so weak and dangerous a foundation as the suppression of a notorious case?

Sir George Mackenzie's "Vindication" was immediately, and *specifically* answered by a bitter Cameronian pamphleteer. There was "Printed for Edward Golding, 1692," in London, an anonymous pamphlet of thirty quarto pages, entitled "A Vindication of the Presbyterians in Scotland, from the *malicious aspersions* cast upon them in a late pamphlet written by Sir George Mackenzie, late Lord Advocate there, entitled a Vindication of the Government in Scotland during the reign of Charles II., &c., by A Lover of Truth." This reply is written in the most angry spirit. It professes to furnish a specific answer to every defensive statement in Sir George's Vindication. There is noted on the margin of each particular answer, the exact page of the loyal Vindication that is being handled. Sir George's statement in question occurs on p. 20 of his pamphlet; and the number of that page of his is printed on the margin of his opponent's pamphlet, in dealing with a matter of minor importance which it contains. But to that very conspicuous and telling statement, relating to the paucity of female executions during the reigns of the Restoration, and to the *drowning of eighty-six women and children by the Covenanters*, in 1646, "A Lover of Truth" *makes no reply whatever*, even when handling, and noting, the *very page* of Sir George's "vindication" in which it occurs. That emphatic passage he entirely eschews. But referring to another page, the Cameronian pamphleteer has this paragraph:—

"Nay, 'tis sufficiently known, that *women* were not exempted from their cruelty (persons, one would think, that could never, either by their policy or their strength, undermine the Government; and *a sex* that might have expected at least some protection from *such a Prince as King Charles II. was*), but were imprisoned, fined, and *some of them executed*."

Why, this is exactly what Sir George himself had admitted, neither less nor more! Will Doctor Tulloch explain how this

Cameronian antagonist came to be ignorant of that grand melodrama of drowning in the reign of James II.? Or, if he knew of it, how he came to be silent on the subject, when he was speaking of *cruelty to women*, and by way of answering Sir George Mackenzie specifically, and page by page? Would he have tacitly allowed the ex-Lord Advocate to escape upon that ingenious plea of Dr Tulloch's, that it was "not the *regular* act of the Government, but a high-handed *outrage* by its *provincial agents*"? Sir George's emphatic challenge *must* have elicited, and with telling effect, the very accusation, had it been possible to make it.

Well. Both of Dr Tulloch's two conflicting theories, of the ex-Advocate's omission of the Wigtown martyrdom, being equally irrational, may we not place it upon the rational theory, that the women having been *pardoned* were *not executed?* How does the Principal deal with the *reprieve?* What does he deduce from that unquestionable fact? He shall answer for himself:—

"But what solution then do the difficulties of the case admit of? If the women were drowned at Wigtown, what is to be made of the reprieve of the Council Register in Edinburgh? *To this question we do not pretend to be able to give a satisfactory answer.* The fact must stand for *what it is worth*, against the tradition, the testimony of the Penninghame Record, and the anonymous pamphlet of 1690. Wodrow's *conjecture* is probably as good as any other—that the *officials* at Wigtown, with *Major Winram at their head*, carried out the sentence, notwithstanding the reprieve. Such an *outrage* would only have been consistent with the *official brutalities* that had made the *Restoration Government* odious throughout Scotland. But the reprieve may *not have been heard of* at Wigtown. Is there any evidence that it ever travelled beyond the Privy Council Office?"

This is all groping in the dark. Carried out what sentence, notwithstanding the reprieve? The women were tried and sentenced at Wigtown on the 13th of April. Colonel Douglas's Commission of Justiciary was limited to the 20th of that same month. The date of their alleged martyrdom at Wigtown is the 11th of May. Did the Lords Commissioners who condemned them appoint a day for the execution that was distant a whole month from the day of the sentence, and twenty-one days beyond the termination of the powers under that Justiciary

Commission? Impossible. The Cumnock men, who were condemned under the same Commission, were sentenced to die on the last day of it, the 20th of April. If a sentence was by way of being "carried out" against these women at Wigtown on the 11th of May, there could have been no ground for pretending that it was the sentence of the Wigtown Court. What sentence, then? The Privy Council's? But the Privy Council had *reprieved* them *sine die* on the 30th of April. And were the theory tenable, which it is not, that the Crown had *refused* the Government recommendation in this inconsequential, and *female* case, even the flying post (by which, however, that recommendation would not be sent), could not have brought back an answer in time to effect their execution at Wigtown on the 11th of May, under a new sentence.

The theory, then, of the reprieve not being heard of at Wigtown, as accounting for their having "carried out the sentence" there, will stand no inspection. The Principal must plead his "high-handed outrage" to the top of the bent. By the 11th of May it *must* have been known at Wigtown, that no sentence of death was now standing against these women, under the Commission that had expired, and was, by *royal proclamation*, declared void and extinct, both for trying and punishing, on the 21st of April. By the 11th of May it *must* have been known at Wigtown, that the Privy Council had reprieved these women on the 30th of April. Wodrow's story is, that that reprieve was obtained in Edinburgh by *Margaret Wilson's own father*. He says that her *relatives* were present at the execution. The Principal's argument then must be, that *Government* had one mind on the subject, and their *Officials* another; that, without an existing sentence at all, in the face of a known reprieve, Captain-Lieutenant Winram, of his Majesty's Scotch Dragoons, rose in rebellion against the State whose petty officer he was, took the King's forces with him, and mutinously acting without the orders of his own Colonel, or the Commander-in-Chief, *murdered* these two women, in presence of remonstrating relatives, and in the face of hundreds of an outraged and excited population, because they would not take the Abjuration Oath, which he had no authority to offer, and which

they had taken already. Captain-Lieutenant Winram would have been pitched into the Solway, his troop annihilated, and the Privy Council, Claverhouse, and the Commander-in-Chief, would have endorsed the deed.

No, says our Primarius Professor of Divinity. Winram's *outrage* "would only have been *consistent* with the *official brutalities* that had made the Restoration Government odious throughout Scotland." This touches the question of "delirious abuse," and "perception of the quality of *impartiality.*" We challenge the Principal to *prove* a single "official brutality" that would justify his violent assumption. The discovery, the unwelcome discovery, of *humane dealing*, utterly subversive of a long-cherished fanatical *fable* of "official brutality," is the occasion which Dr Tulloch seizes, not to clear his own mind from the cobwebs which Wodrow has woven there, but to blow a feebler blast upon the cracked and crazy trumpet that welcomed King William to Scotland, amid an *orage* of such "delirious abuse."

SECTION IX.

Sir George Mackenzie's Statement of the precise number of Female State Criminals executed during the Reigns of the Restoration corroborated by all the Diaries and Reports of his Whig opponent Fountainhall.

Sir John Lauder, conspicuous among the most distinguished Whig lawyers who were in active employment during the reigns of the Restoration, is best known by the name of Fountainhall, a title derived from his patrimonial estate, and by which he was elevated to the Bench soon after the Revolution. Throughout his whole career at the Bar, he stood in determined and consistent, but not virulent opposition to the Government. He was of counsel for the Earl of Argyle on his trial; and his able professional services were never withheld

from the unfortunate fanatics who paid the forfeit of their lives for the most insane treason, to which they were prompted by the conventicle preachers. He took great interest in all such cases, and never failed to record, in his very voluminous *notanda*, whatever was at all remarkable of the kind. But all his observations, on such cases, tend to justify the Government he opposed. Any notable instance of the trial, demeanour, or execution, especially of a State criminal, was sure to find a place in one or other of his note-books, and often in them all. These, happily, have been published of late years, to the great confusion of Wodrow's monster history. His collection of the decisions of the Lords of Council and Session, from June 6th 1678 to July 30th 1712, were published in the last century; being a very valuable work in two volumes folio, which also contains the transactions of the Privy Council, of the High Court of Justiciary, and of the Court of Exchequer; the whole being interspersed with a variety of historical facts, and many curious anecdotes. In 1840, the Bannatyne Club printed another of his valuable repertories of political and judicial history, namely, "*Historical Observes* of memorable occurrents in Church and State, from October 1680 to April 1686, by Sir John Lauder of Fountainhall." And lastly, in 1848, under the auspices of the same literary institution, appeared "*Historical Notices* of Scotish affairs, selected from the manuscripts of Sir John Lauder of Fountainhall, Bart.," in two large volumes quarto, embracing the period from June 1661 to July 1688.

Here, then, are ample materials, and of the best kind, for testing the truth of that very specific statement, relative to the execution of females, by the Lord Advocate, to whom Fountainhall was continually opposed both politically and professionally. Can that statement be refuted or contradicted out of the voluminous repertories of such events so elaborately recorded by this Whig lawyer? On the contrary, Fountainhall's diaries afford a strong and exact confirmation of Sir George Mackenzie's declaration. Fountainhall records no execution of the kind, except that of these same two women, *Isobel Alison* and *Marion Harvey*, in the reign of Charles II.; and in the reign of James II. *not one*. That single occasion

(for the two women were tried and executed together), he thus very fairly narrates, entirely corroborating the Lord Advocate as to the dangerous character of the rebellion of these women :—

" 26th February 1681.—There were hanged at Edinburgh two women of ordinary rank, for their uttering *treasonable words*, and *other* principles and opinions contrary to all our Government. The one was called Janet [*Isobel*] Alison, a Perth woman, the other [Marion] Harvie, from Borrowstounness. They were of *Cameron's* faction; bigots, and *sworn enemies to the King and Bishops;* of the *same stamp* with Rathillet, Skene, Stewart, and Potter."

Now the men here named were the most truculent of the sect, fit for nothing but the gallows. Rathillet, indeed, was ringleader in the murder of the Primate. Fountainhall, with all his whiggism, has more sense and candour than to record these women as saints and martyrs. Sir George Mackenzie had indicted them, *inter alia*, for having resetted and harboured, for many weeks together, the murderers of the Archbishop. But their treasonable and violent declamation against the Sovereign, before the Privy Council and the Justiciary Court, caused the Advocate to rest the case against them on the general charge, and he waived leading any evidence as to the particular charge of harbouring the murderers of the Primate. So, of that charge the jury acquitted them, but found them guilty of high treason upon their own confession. The whig lawyer expresses a doubt as to the law of deducing high treason from *words*, however outrageous in their treasonable character, and wherever uttered, without *overt acts*. But more especially he doubts the Government policy of honouring any *female* delinquent with *martyrdom*. Referring to another of his own note-books, he thus continues his note on the case of the two women :—

" We debate [elsewhere] how far *men*,—for *women* are scarce to be *honoured* with that *martyrdom*, as they call it,—are to be punished *capitally*, for their bare perverse judgments without *acting*. Some thought the threatening to *drown them* [the women] *privately in the North Loch*, without giving them the credit of a *public* suffering, would have more effectually reclaimed them nor [than] any arguments which were used; and the bringing them to a *scaffold* but disseminates the infection. *However*, these women proved *very obstinate*, and for *all the pains taken*, would

not once acknowledge the King to be their lawful Prince. but called him a *perjured bloody man.* At the stage they told, so long as they followed and heard the *Curates*, they were *swearers*, *Sabbath-breakers*, and with *much aversion* read the Scriptures; but found much joy upon their spirit, since they followed the *conventicle preachers.*"

This completely corroborates Sir George Mackenzie in the character he gives of these viragoes, in his Vindication; and also as to his having done every thing in his power, even after sentence, to save them from themselves and their seducers. And what period of public commotion, and what country, can be pointed to, in which the Government of an hereditary Monarchy, recently restored against anarchy and military despotism, having to deal with, and defend itself against, the most violent revolutionary agitation, garnished with murders and assassinations committed in the name of God, would not have treated such determined and dangerous women as Isobel Alison and Marion Harvey, with much less ceremony than did Sir George Mackenzie, under the Lauderdale administration?

But were we to believe Wodrow, and his coadjutor Crookshanks, the execution of *another female* for high treason actually *did* occur in the reign of Charles II.; namely, that of *Christian Fyff*, in 1682. This, indeed, would afford a sufficient answer to Sir George Mackenzie's precise and emphatic declaration; and as it also happens to be a *metropolitan* case, it would deprive the ex-Lord Advocate of the pretext of ignorance, he having conducted the case himself. Upon the 27th of March 1682, this woman was indicted for high treason, rebellion, and invading a minister of the gospel in his own church, this last being a statutory crime. Her indictment, which we find in the records of the High Court of Justiciary, thus tells the story:—

"Neverless it is of veritie, that, upon Sabbath day last, the 19th day of March instant (1682), you the said Christian Fyff, did come to the old church of Edinburgh, and there, as Mr Ramsay, minister, was coming down from the pulpit after divine service in the forenoon, you did flie upon, assault, and invade him, most furiouslie, did revile and upbraid him with many opprobrious speeches, whereby the congregation, then dissolving, was put in a great fray and confusion; and you, being called before a Committee of his Majesty's Privy Council, and examined thereanent upon the 21st day of March *instant*, you did confess that you did beat the said Mr Ramsay, and in their presence called him an *unlawful*

minister, and *a devil;* and not satisfied therewith, you, not only in presence of the said Committee, but in face of Council, did most treasonably decline the King's authority, and the authority of the Council, did most treasonably revile and upbraid him, called him an unlawful King, and the Judges unlawful Judges, and murderers, for pursuing and causing execute a just sentence against Mr Donald Cargill, and Hackstone of Rathillet, for open rebellion, and murdering the Archbishop of St Andrews; declaring that since Mr Donald was executed there was not a lawful minister in Scotland; and that you think it lawful, and good service to God, to kill all the Bishops of the Kingdom; and that the killing of the Archbishop was *no murder;* and therethrough you have committed and are guilty of the crimes of treason, beating and invading of a minister, which being found by an assize you ought to be punished with forfeiture of life, land, and goods, to the terror of others to commit the like hereafter."

It must be borne in mind that the life of the Primate had nearly fallen a sacrifice to such female fanatics, at the very door of the Council Chamber, some time before the ruffians massacred him on Magus Moor. And, moreover, the Government were in possession of sworn evidence, relative to that murder (the escape of the perpetrators of which had been too successfully aided by women), which might well impress upon it, that women were neither to be despised, nor tenderly dealt with, in such cases, on the score of their sex, or their ignorance. John Millar, tenant in Magask, deponed—"That, three days before the murder, some of the assassins had a meeting at *Millar's house* in Magask, where they concerted the business; that the next night they lodged at Robert Black's house, in Baldinny, *whose wife was a great instigator of the fact;* and that, at parting, when one of them *kissed her*, she prayed that God might bless and prosper them; and added these words: 'If long Leslie' (Mr Alexander Leslie, minister of Ceres) 'be with him, *lay him on the green also;*' to which was answered, '*There* is the *hand that shall do it.*'"

Now, Christian Fyff was a woman precisely of this stamp. She would have murdered the minister (a most worthy clergyman) had she been able, or would have instigated any ruffian to the deed. We find her, however, figuring in Wodrow's calendar of saints and martyrs, and her case quoted in support of his own revilings of the Government, scarcely less savage and less ignorant than hers. After giving a short epitome of the crimes charged against her, he adds—"Without *any diffi-*

culty the assize bring her in guilty, and the Lords sentence her to be hanged at the Grassmarket upon the 7th of April 1682." And thus he leaves her recorded as a Grassmarket martyr, evidently believing that she suffered accordingly. Indeed, that other great covenanting authority, Crookshanks (Wodrow's parrot), says expressly, "She was sentenced to be hanged upon the 7th of April, *which was done accordingly.*"

But the woman was *not executed!* The remarkable nature of the case (but certainly not so remarkable as would have been the drowning drama at Wigtown) caused Fountainhall to note it in his Collection of Decisions, where it stands reported thus:—

"27th March 1682.—At Criminal Court, the woman called Christian Fyffe, who had struck Mr Alexander Ramsay, the minister of Edinburgh, was condemned to be hanged on the 7th of April next, for railing upon his Majesty, calling the King a *villain*, a *knave*, an *apostate perjured man*, who deserved to be *murdered*, &c.; which she *would not retract*, though *her life was offered her if she would do it*. This was a wild delusion of *Cameron's sowing*. But the Privy Council, looking on her as mad, REPRIEVED her."

In this case of Christian Fyffe, then, we have no instance contradicting Sir George Mackenzie's statement. On the contrary, against the calumnious testimony both of Wodrow and Crookshanks, that this virago was a martyr to the insatiable cruelty of the Stuart Government, we learn from that higher-minded whig, Fountainhall, that her case affords another of many examples of the *humane forbearance* of that Government, in great danger, and under extreme provocation, and more especially of its *constant disposition to be merciful to ignorant women.*

SECTION X.

Sir George Mackenzie still further, and exactly, corroborated, by the calumnious Papers of Grievances and Sufferings, penned by Conventicle Preachers, and promoted by the rebellious Presbyterians in Scotland, to induce the Prince of Orange to invade the Kingdom.

The Wigtown Martyrdom is unquestionably the grandest of all the "Sufferings of the Kirk" that Wodrow has collected, and Scotland swallowed. It is the very star of Scotch martyrology. Whig history and fanatical psalmody have fed on it ever since Wodrow wrote. Charles Fox has this magniloquent sentence on the subject, in that feeble history of his, the most innocently false, and the most elegantly useless, ever written:—"Women, obstinate in their fanaticism, lest female blood should be a stain *upon the swords of soldiers* engaged in this *honourable* employment, *were drowned.*" A new view of the subject this, and utterly unknown to the historical records of Scotland. Fox himself, in his correspondence, referring to the composition of history, says, "With respect to *facts*, it is hardly possible to be too scrupulous. It is astonishing how many facts one finds related, for which there is no authority whatever." That astonishment is anything but diminished by Fox's own fragmentary essay. Could he have *proved*, against Sir George Mackenzie's statement, that any woman whatever was drowned during the whole reigns of the Restoration? Did he know what that *drowning order* of 1684–5 meant? Could he have *proved* that novel assertion of his, that women were ordered to be drowned, at that crisis, in order to spare *soldiers* the necessity of *putting them to the sword?*

But surely at the time this great event happened, supposing it to have happened as Wodrow narrates it, the scene had been impressed upon the suffering mind of Presbyterian Scotland in lines of truth that time could neither efface nor confuse. No matter whether perpetrated by the heavy-handed vengeance of the great Executive, or the "high-handed outrage" of the little Executive, whether by *ursa major* or *ursa minor*,

it must at the time have been in the heart and in the mouth of every true-blue Presbyterian as the most clamant instance of those popular sufferings in Scotland, which are supposed to excuse and hallow the rebellious cry to Holland, "Come thou and take this city." What a dull boy Wodrow must have been. He was *six years old* in 1685, the year of the Wigton martyrdom, having been born in 1679; yet we cannot find a hint in his voluminous record of that exciting incident,—the truth of which, he complains, was *denied* by "our Jacobites," at the time he is writing it,—that there then lingered upon his own mind the faintest reminiscence of such a scene having occurred in Scotland. And this is the more remarkable that, in 1685, Wodrow's father, who did not die until 1707, was a rebellious field preacher, exercising that vocation in the west of Scotland. Moreover, Wodrow's father-in-law, Patrick Warner, who also lived into the eighteenth century, and died unhanged, was a noted firebrand in 1685. There were not two men in Scotland upon whose minds such an event as the drowning martyrdom at Wigtown would have made a deeper impression than upon these two rebellious preachers. Now, there is not a trace to be discovered in Wodrow's History, either that a shadow of the fact of such a martyrdom dwelt in his own memory, or that he had ever heard a word on the subject from his father, or his father-in-law. His leading authority is *collections* made by Robert Rowan, minister of Penningham, in 1711, and *pretended*, but always *latent*, evidence of *that date*. But he neither quotes a reminiscence of *his own*, in 1685, nor a word of evidence on the subject from his father, or the father of his wife, with whom he was in constant correspondence. Suppose that our martyrologist, in reply to the *denial* of "our Jacobites" in 1710–11, had said,—"But I was six years of age when the event happened; I *remember* the *sensation* it created; my father taught the truths of the gospel to the *persecuted* west in that very year; my father-in-law did the same: they laboured in the same dangerous vineyard out of which my father's brother was taken and hanged; the fact of the women drowned at Wigtown was as well known to my whole parentage as that the sun shone in the heavens, and I have heard them discourse of it again and again." Would that not have

been a potent answer? Nay, would that not have been the answer, had it been the case? And could it, by any possibility, have failed to be the case had that awful public scene of a female sacrifice by drowning,—the sainted aged and the innocent young,—occurred at the burgh of Wigtown on the 11th of May 1685? We have also ransacked the immense mass of Wodrow's Collections to discover any *contemporaneous* knowledge of such an event having occurred in Scotland, but in vain. But while there was nothing in Wodrow's own memory, or derived from his parents, to assure him that the Wigtown martyrdom was true, there were papers in his own possession that might have convinced him it was false. If (according to Dr Tulloch) the Lord Advocate of the day never became cognisant of it, because Wigtown was "a remote part of Scotland;" or, alternatively, that being cognisant of it, he was "interested" to suppress the instance in his "Vindication," these desperate theories can have no application to contemporaneous collectors of such "sufferings," who were unscrupulously concocting a case of *cruelty* against the Government, in aid of the Orange invasion, and gathering their instances *from Galloway itself.*

In 1686 and 1687, the Conventicle leaders, greatly encouraged and strengthened by the weak temporising policy of King James, were agitating with all their energy for the Prince of Orange, and continually framing papers of "grievances and sufferings," rudely raked together in the most contemptible form, and without the slightest regard to truth. There is a volume of Wodrow's MS. Collections which contains several of these papers, by different hands, all of them purporting to be an "Account of Sufferings in the late times, between 1660 and 1688."

1. The first of these papers is thus indexed, in the handwriting of Wodrow himself:—"Account of the Sufferings from 1660 to 1688. *Mr D. Williamson.*" There can be no doubt that this means that notorious character, the very *Don Juan* of the Covenant, Master David Williamson, who became established as minister of the West Kirk after the Revolution. This disreputable fanatic had every motive for maligning the Government under whose bann he so often placed himself, and, accordingly, he worked most zealously for the advent of the

Prince of Orange. In the paper in question, after an elaborate exposition and defence of Presbyterian principles, he comes to the usual tirade of falsehoods against the Government, as having exercised the utmost cruelty and oppression against the people of Scotland. Though very anxious to particularise, he is put to it to find specific cases in support of his sweeping accusation, but rakes together, in the accustomed form of vague and unvouched railing, all he can gather. The drowning martyrdom at Wigtown would have been invaluable to this collector. Cruelty to *women* was the very best theme he could have dwelt upon. But this erotic apostle of the Conventicles can scarcely face that accusation at all. So soon after the event as 1687, "Dainty Davie," (for so he lives in unseemly song), *knew nothing of two women having been drowned at Wigtown* in 1685. He only knew (exactly what Sir George Mackenzie told) that two women were hanged at Edinburgh in 1681. All that he was able to gather, about the martyrdom of women, is contained in the following paragraphs:—

"Several *sick women* were haled to these courts by the rude souldiours, for *not hearing the conformists;* some whereofe died within few days after they were put in prisone: As *Agnes Livistoun* in Kipen parioch. The *ministers* were imprisoned, and some of them banished, for refusing to give in bond and caution not to preach within the kingdom. Commissions are granted to souldiours, and others, as Captain Metland and Mr Ezekiel Montgomry, to sumond all the countrey before them, and to putt them to their oath, to answer all questions they should propose. Of some they did expiscat matter of accusatione, for which they did endyte, and put them to death; as, whether they thought Bothwel a rebellione; the killing of the Archbishope of St Andrews, murther? *Yea, women were not spared, as witness two women executed at Edinburgh.*"

And this is all that "Dainty Davie" could report or collect, in 1687, about female martyrs! Is it credible that a cruel drowning of two women at Wigtown in 1685 could have been unknown to him? Is it possible to conceive that, had any such scene occurred, (no matter whether by order of the Government, or in consequence of a *mistake* of the Government, or of a "high-handed outrage by its provincial agents"), it would not have figured conspicuously in a list of sufferings collected for such a purpose, by such an agitator as *Master David Williamson?* On the other hand, this contemporaneous witness

exactly corroborates the statement of Sir George Mackenzie. For there can be no question whatever, that the solitary case to which he refers, of the execution of two women, hanged at Edinburgh, is that of *Isobel Alison* and *Marion Harvey.*

2. The next paper is still more important. It is indexed by Wodrow—"Representation of the grievances of the Presbyterians in Scotland to the Prince of Orrange, 1688;" and commences with this address:—"To his Royall Hyghnes the Prince of Orange, the Representation of the Grievances of manie, manie, thousands in the Church and Kingdome of Scotland, caused from a prevailing factione making defectione from the *lowdiable*[1] work of Reformatione at our first coming out of Popery, the year 1560, and renewed, after thirty years' defectione, in the year 1638, untill 1660." There follows a long and elaborate exposition of grievances in Church and State, concluding with a catalogue of particular instances of alleged oppression and cruelty, in the unvouched, stereotyped form of these fanatical libels. Every legal fine for rebellious disorder is oppressive extortion. Every punishment by the Executive for seditious dealing, or the most truculent treason, is set down as cruelty or murder. Among the rebels in Scotland there was not a single criminal. In the Government, or on the Bench, there was not one righteous or just man. Such is the type and principle of all these low collections of "Sufferings," and in the one in question that postulate is pressed to the utmost. What, then, of cruelty to females,—of "the drowning of women?" It is all contained in this short sentence:—

"*Eightly:* They *executed* several simple women, for *meer words*, spoken out of their zeal, but wanting knowledge.

"It is impossible to relate all their boutcheries and cruel persecutions."

This has no application to the Wigtown martyrs, or the "drowning of women." It is still those two women executed at Edinburgh, *Isobel Alison* and *Marion Harvey.* Fountainhall, as we have seen, points to the fact that they were executed for their "treasonable words, without acting;" but he

[1] Curiously enough, so it is written in the MS.; probably meaning *laudable.*

fairly states the nature of the case, and justifies the Government. Manifestly the drowning martyrdom at Wigtown, which here would have told so well, was also *unknown to the framer of this petition*, the date of which is prior to the landing of the Prince of Orange in England. It is entitled on the back—"A large Representation of the Grievances of Scotland, to the Prince of Orange;" and it concludes with the following recommendation:—

"It is advised, 1. That some be sent with this address to the Prince of Orange, to be delyvered first to the Earle of Crawford, and other well affected noblemen and gentlemen there with him; and by them subscribed, and delyvered to the Prince. 2. That the subscriptions be written in a *by* paper, relating to this address, that the names be not *published*, if it should be printed; and who subscribes would doe it in the name of a meeting of *ministers* and others, and of *many thousands* of this land, who will adhere thereto; which is to be for a call and warrant to the Prince."

3. The next paper of the kind we have to notice, is indexed by Wodrow—"Grievances from Scotland 1661 to 1688, from *Nidsdale, Anandale,* and *Gallaway.*" This, at least, does not labour under the defect which Dr Tulloch suggests against the evidence of Sir George Mackenzie, whom he assumes to be necessarily uninformed of any "suffering" that was not *metropolitan.* This is from a *provincial* collector. This is from *Galloway* itself, the classic ground of the great drowning drama, comprehending the very date, concocted soon after that most exciting event, and having the same object in view of promoting the advent of the Prince of Orange. Among the cruelties enumerated in this paper, as relates to females, we have notices of women scourged in Dumfries, and Widow M'Birnie's tyrannical treatment by the Duke of Queensberry, but not a word about the Wigtown martyrs. Again we have, in the following passage, an allusion to the two women executed at Edinburgh, "meerly for their *opinions;*" but even by this *Galloway* collector, old Margaret Lauchlison, and dear Margaret Wilson, remain unhonoured, unwept, and unsung:—

"Many ther lives taken, *men and women, meerly for ther opinion,* who could not distinguish betwixt autority and misapplyed power."

4 and 5. Other two collections of sufferings in the same volume of Wodrow's MS., by different hands, entitled, "An

other large Account of Sufferings in the *late Tymes*," and "Grievances *from Scotland*," both in like manner, and in *precisely similar terms*, allude to the execution of the two women at Edinburgh for their treasonable reviling of the King, and declining his authority; but not a word of the most exciting and conspicuous martyrdom in Scotland (had it happened), the drowning of the Wigtown martyrs.

6. Yet another of these contemporaneous documents must be noticed, as it happens to refer to a martyrdom, occurring on the very day assigned as that on which the saints of the Solway suffered, viz., the 11th of May 1685.

This manuscript is indexed by Wodrow, "Memorandum Concerning the Garrisons and Souldiers, 1679." But it contains much more than that, being a memorandum also "of the murders committed in the Stewartrie of *Gallaway*, by Claverhouse, Lag, Colonel Douglas, and others;" embracing the dates between 1679 and 1688. The following, towards the conclusion of the paper, all relate to the year 1685:—

"January 23d, 1685.—Cornal Douglas, with a partie of horse, killed 6 men at the Calduns [of Galloway].

"The garisons of Earlstoune, Watterhead, and Machermoor planted, January 1685.

"Six men killed by Lag and his partie at Lockerbie, February 19, 1685. The 21st day 5 more killed by him and his partie at Kirkconnal.

"The 20th of February [1685] 2 hung up upon trees, at Irongray, by Captain Bruce.

"The Highlanders brought to the countrie the beginning of May [1685].

"The *eleivnt of May* [1685] a man shot at Newtoune [of Galloway], by Cornall Duglass and his partie, who cam in the said tyme.

"June 11 [1685] Lag and a partie of dragoons killed uther twa men near to the place where he killed the 5 before.

"June 13 [1685] two regiments came to Newgallaway, and therefter went to Minigaffe. They stayed a twentie dayes, and killed a number of *nolt* and *sheep*, belonging to suffering men."[1]

Must we raise the dead, to prove that these women were not drowned? Are they who say they *were* drowned, not bound to prove anything? Here are contemporaneous accusations of oppression and cruelty, committed in *Galloway*, pre-

[1] Wodrow's MS. Collections, Vol. XL. *Advocates' Library.*

ferred against the two leading Lords Commissioners of Justiciary who tried and condemned these women at Wigtown, Colonel Douglas, and Sir Robert Grierson of Lagg,—and not a hint of their cruelty to those female martyrs! Yet these are the very men upon whom the odium of having murdered them was cast in the following century. The "Cloud of Witnesses," published in 1714, gives the 11th of May 1685, as the day of their martyrdom. But here we have Colonel Douglas accused of shooting a man at the Newton of Galloway (who doubtless deserved it, if shot he was), on the 11th of May 1685, the *very day of that famous scene at Wigtown*, and not a word about those blessed martyrs! Lagg's enormities, too, in Dumfries and Galloway, both immediately before and immediately after that date, are recorded against him; but not a whisper of that grand accusation which the fanatical fables, and the truthless tombstones, of the succeeding century, expressly point against that terrible ogre. And how is Wodrow to be excused? He had found the *reprieve*. He had acquired these contemporaneous documents. He had not acquired a vestige of proof to the contrary; at least, he has not given it Could any fair and rational man have avoided coming to the conclusion, that these two women had been *pardoned*, and were *not drowned?*—a conclusion to which even his own memory must have led the martyrologist, had it suited him to search it. For, in 1685, Wodrow was six years of age.

CONCLUSION.

Upon the whole of the foregoing evidence, *positive* and *negative*, we now venture to maintain, that the following propositions are so proved as to be placed beyond the power of rational contradiction. And further, that these propositions being proved, the alleged drowning of the two women at Wigtown, in 1685, becomes both *morally* and *physically* impossible.

1. Margaret Lauchlison (or M'Lauchlan), and Margaret Wilson, were tried and condemned together for high treason on the 13th of April 1685, at Wigtown, on the eve of Argyle's invasion, by a royal Commission of Justiciary, with a jury, and under a special law which had been rendered necessary for the protection of the lieges from fanatical assassinations, and of the throne against foreign invasion; but a law of careful criminal justice, and of *great forbearance and humanity as regards traitors of the female sex.*

2. The Lords Commissioners of Justiciary who condemned these two women at Wigtown, in terms of that law, exercised their jurisdiction as humanely as the circumstances could possibly admit of, by allowing them ample time to petition the Privy Council for mercy.

3. The Privy Council of Scotland, including the representative of the Sovereign, and all the highest functionaries of the Crown and the Executive, in like manner exercised the utmost humanity of which the case admitted, by reprieving the condemned *sine die*, and recommending them to the Crown for a free pardon, upon their submission to the sovereign authority, and after having taken the Abjuration Oath of 1685, under the authority of the Privy Council at Edinburgh.

4. On the 11th of May 1685, when these two women are alleged to have been publicly executed by drowning at Wigtown, in pursuance of their sentence, they were in prison in Edinburgh, under the executive jurisdiction of the Magistrates of the Metropolis, awaiting the confirmation of their pardon from the Crown, the Provost of Wigtown being also in Edinburgh at the same time.

5. The humanity of the Lords Commissioners who tried them, of the Privy Council, the Lord High Commissioner presiding therein, and of the Crown, having been extended to these condemned females, there was no one else in the kingdom who could have any interest, or inclination, or who would have dared, or who could have contrived, to put them to death at Wigtown, in the manner described, with a show of Government authority, and of a military force that was under the orders of the Privy Council and the Commander-in-chief.

6. These two women were condemned in the reign of James

II., and *no woman whatever suffered death for high treason in Scotland during that Monarch's reign.*

We have accomplished our undertaking. That was, *first*, to detect and destroy Lord Macaulay's calumny against James II., and his Government in Scotland, as to the "drowning of women," and the alleged judicial murder of these two women at Wigtown; and, *second*, to prove a difficult negative, after the lapse of nearly two centuries—viz., that the women were not in point of fact put to death at Wigtown, as fabulously narrated by Wodrow, either under a regular judicial sentence, or by a cruel and contumacious outrage, committed against the Government and the Crown, by certain official agents of Government on the spot. We lie under no further obligation, in that undertaking, to account for the origin or endurance of the popular belief, or for the various *contradictory versions* of that wild romance of martyrdom which, when discovered to be false and calumnious, becomes simply ridiculous, if not disgusting. But the long and wide prevalence of the fable, though not difficult to account for, has weight with many, and the fanatical calumny is very obstinate. We propose, therefore, in a separate part of this investigation, to examine the traditionary merits of such martyrologies in Scotland, and to trace out in what manner, and to what extent, that leading martyrdom, now proved to be false, came to be received as true.

PART SECOND.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE FABULOUS ROMANCE OF THE WIGTOWN MARTYRS.

PART SECOND.

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SECTION I.

Detection of Alexander Shields' First Falsehood on the Subject of the Drowning of Women, at the close of the 17th Century.

ALEXANDER SHIELDS, the author of "A Hind Let Loose," is also the author and originator of the *general* falsehood adopted by Lord Macaulay as to the habitual "drowning of women" by the Governments of the Restoration, and of the *particular* falsehood, that Margaret Wilson and Margaret Lauchlison suffered death by drowning at Wigtown, on the 11th of May 1685. The following character of this man, and his insane work, is recorded by Lord Macaulay himself, in his History of England. After giving the severest character of the Cameronian Covenanters perhaps ever penned, he thus justifies himself in a note:—"If any person is inclined to suspect that I have exaggerated the *absurdity* and *ferocity* of these men, I would advise him to read two books which will convince him that I have rather *softened* than over-charged the portrait—Shields' *Hind Let Loose*, and *Faithful Contendings displayed*." Had the noble author added the epithet *falsehood* to absurdity and ferocity, his portrait would have been as complete as it is true.

After having been obscurely employed for a time as an amanuensis in London, this Alexander Shields, a Scotch Covenanter, joined a crew of disaffected dissenters, and very soon got into hot water. His first walk in rebellion was opposition to the Oath of Allegiance; and, upon the 11th of January 1685, he was apprehended in London with some others by the City Marshal, at a private meeting in Gutter Lane, and brought before the Lord Mayor. Discovered to be a dangerous character, he was sent down to Scotland, to be dealt with there. The advent of this important personage is thus slightly noticed by Fountainhall, who had mistaken his first name :—

"12th March 1685.—One of his Majesty's yachts arrived at Leith with seven or eight Scots prisoners tane at a conventicle in London, whereof two of them were students of divinity; the one called Mr Patrick [Alexander] Sheills, the other called Mr John Fraser, who was afterwards delivered to Mr George Scott of Pitlochy, to be transported to New Jersey. I have seen a written testimony he has left, disowning the King's Church supremacy, &c. The rest were tailors and tradesmen, *bigot in their fanaticism.*"

Before the Privy Council and the High Court of Justiciary, Shields did his utmost to evade the Oath of Abjuration. Not being ambitious, however, of the crown of martyrdom for himself, he submitted to *abjure* treason and murder before the Lords of Justiciary, in terms of the oath, as thus recorded against him in the books of Court, 26th March 1685.

"Mr Alexander Shiell, who was brought down prisoner from London, being examined before the said Lords (of Justiciary), did *abhorre, renunce, and disowne, in presence of the Almighty God*, the pretendit declaration of war, in so far as it declares war against his Majesty, and asserts that it is lawful to kill such as serve his Majestie in Church, State, Army, or Countrey."

Nevertheless, immediately after this, Shields commenced a secret correspondence with John Balfour of Kinloch (the murderer of the Primate), and with other truculent rebels in Holland, affecting deep sorrow of mind for having thus abjured treason and murder, and pleading compulsion as the cause of his compliance. This letter being intercepted, the writer of it is again before the Lords of Justiciary, and again

in an attitude of submission, on the 6th of August 1685, as also appears from their books.

"Mr Alexander Shiell having signed the Abjuration, and having owned the King's authority, but *not upon oath*, the King's Advocate, in respect thereof declared that the Justices might continue the diet against him, and the said Master Alexander did humbly beg the Lords would continue the same, which was accordingly done, and the case was referred to the Council."

To Fountainhall we are indebted for a more detailed account of the demeanour upon the latter occasion, of this unprincipled traitor, by whom so many were excited to the doom he was ever careful to avoid.

"9th August 1685.—At Criminal Court, Mr Alexander Shiells, student of divinity, sent down from England by the King last winter, and was before the Articles of Parliament. He, after much *vclitation*, at last consented to sign the abjuration of these treasonable principles of rising in arms, &c.; but declined to swear it, which is conform to the 23d Act of the last Parliament in 1685, not mentioning *swearing*," &c.

"Sheills would have entered a protestation that he signed it only in so far as it was *consistent with his duty;* but this was utterly rejected, and he required to do it simply. Then he complained, that the only liberty of a subject being that of the *freedom of judgment and thought in controverted cases*, this should be retrenched; yet, seing authority required him, he was content to *declare* he owned the present King, and that it was unlawful to raise war against him, or to *assassinate* his adherers: yet a man might *declare* many things he could not *swear;* and he said, though he was a Presbyterian, yet he was against the imposition and the pressing of the Covenant itself; and at last he subscribed the *Abjuration*. But, in regard he had *formerly retracted* his taking the said abjuration, and said he was *forced*, it was marked now that what he had done was *voluntary*. They therefore resolved only to banish him."—(*Decisions.*)

But this cunning criminal, who was treated with great forbearance, contrived to defeat the ends of justice, and ere long found an opportunity of illustrating what he meant by "freedom of judgment and thought in controverted cases;" the controversy being as to the right of subjects such as himself to declare civil war against the King, and to assassinate the people to any extent they might judge to be proper. He made his escape from the Tolbooth of Edinburgh on the 22d of October 1686, disguised in female attire, aided, doubtless, by such women as he accused the Government of *habitually*

drowning, although that stern measure of justice was never, in any single instance, meted out to these sisters, not of mercy, but of murder.

Having thus saved his neck, and contrived to break his bonds, Alexander Shields incontinently joined the armed outlaws who rejoiced in the name of "Society People," and in the leadership of such saints as Robert Hamilton, Cameron, Cargill, and Renwick, which last was now at their head in Scotland. He who had twice solemnly abjured, and declared his *abhorrence* of Renwick's proclamation, immediately joined that desperate criminal, who was skulking in arms against the State. Wodrow thus narrates it, under the transactions of 1686:—

"That *excellent person*, Mr Alexander Sheills, was received by the Societies. He had found means to escape out of his confinement, and made an acknowledgment to the general meeting of what he thought he had *done wrong before the Justiciary*. He was extremely welcome to Mr Renwick and the more judicious people among them. He was mighty useful to them, and much against some of the *lengths they ran to*, and came in heartily at the Revolution, as I doubt not Mr Renwick would have done had he been alive."

We learn from Renwick's own letters to Robert Hamilton, that he considered his reception of Shields into his army of saints and martyrs, as a matter which required elaborate explanation and apology. He says, that this backslider, after having escaped from prison, joined them on the 5th of December 1686, at a meeting they were holding in Galloway, in the wood of Earlston, for preaching; but that he was received as a *sinning* brother, and not at once admitted to their full society, until "God should touch his heart, and bring him out from his defections unto the public work." Renwick then proceeds as follows:—

"Howbeit we thought fit to employ him sometimes to go about family exercise, not seeing any reason why this should be forborne, for thereby we might attain to more clearness anent him. And, indeed, *in a certain family*, where some neighbours (as is ordinary) were gathered into the worship, I was *greatly refreshed* with what he spake from *Rom.* xii. 12; especially with what he had in prayer, with a *heavy lamentation*, to this purpose:—

"'I cannot longer contain, but I must confess unto the Lord, before this people, I am *ashamed* to offer my body a *living* sacrifice to Thee;

yet I must do it; for I, a prisoner and a preacher, *might have been a martyr;* but I, sinfully and shamefully, *saved my life with disowning thy friends* [treason and assassination!], and owning thy enemies; and it it will be *a wonder* if ever Thou put such an honourable opportunity in my hand again.'" [1]

A "wonder" it would have been, considering the pains ever taken by himself to prevent it. But Shields did a great deal more than this to establish his character as a perfect Christian, damaged as that had been by a compulsory abjuration of the tenets of murder and treason. In this same year 1687, two years after his solemn declaration of abhorrence of the proclamation of his friend and master Renwick, he published (anonymously of course), that work of his which even Lord Macaulay has visited with severe reprehension. It may be most truly characterised as the great Institute of the Lynch-law of the Kirk, supplementing and upholding Renwick's Proclamation. And therein, assuredly, he makes ample, and safe, amends for what "he had done wrong before the Justiciary." He denounces the reigning Sovereign, and all that royal race from the time of Queen Mary, as adulterous miscreants, bastards, murderers, and parricides. The murdered Primate he execrates as a villain, a *sorcerer*, a murderer, and a beast of prey. He loudly proclaims the people's right of Lynch-law, in the face of an established Executive; and, quoting John Knox as a *practical* approver of such frightful doctrines, breaks forth into this indignant climax,—"Yet now *such a fact* [as the murder of Cardinal Beaton], committed upon such *another* bloody and treacherous beast, the Cardinal Prelate of Scotland, eight years agone, is generally condemned as *horrid murder!*" Moreover, that there might be no mistake as to his own enthusiastic admiration of the deed, he thus records it:—

"That truculent traitor, James Sharp, the Arch-Prelate, &c., received the *just demerit* of his perfidy, apostacy, *sorceries*, villanies, and mur-

[1] Letter from Renwick to Robert Hamilton in Holland, January 11, 1687. From a rare volume, printed at Edinburgh 1764, containing *sixty-one* letters from Renwick to his fanatical friends, from the years 1663 to 1689 inclusive, some of them written in 1685, after the alleged martyrdom at Wigtown. *Not one of Renwick's letters contain an allusion to these women.*

ders,—sharp arrows of the mighty, and coals of juniper. For, upon the 3d of May 1679, several *worthy gentlemen*, with some other men of *courage*, and *zeal for the cause of God*, and the good of the country, executed *righteous* judgment upon him, in Magus Muir, near St Andrews."—(*A Hind Let Loose.*)

Now, it is in this very work, put forth anonymously, and under these circumstances, by this railing Rab-shakeh of the Conventicles, that the unmitigated falsehood, of the "drowning of women," by the Government of the Restoration, is first promulgated. *No single instance of the kind having ever occurred under either of those reigns;* and no instance having ever been even alleged by the bitterest calumniators of those Governments,—Alexander Shields, in 1687, thus states it in "A Hind Let Loose:"—

"Others were daily more and more confirmed in the ways of the Lord, and so strengthened by His grace, that they choose rather to endure all torture, and embrace death in its most terrible aspect, than to give the tyrant and his complices any acknowledgment; yea, not so much as to say *God save the King*, which was offered as the price of their life, and test of their acknowledgment; but they would not *accept deliverance on these terms*, that they might obtain a better resurrection; which so enraged the *tigrish truculency* of these persecutors, that they spared neither age, sex, nor profession; the tenderness of youth did not move them to any relenting in murdering *very boys* upon this head; nor the grey hairs of the aged; neither were *women* spared; but some were hanged, some *drowned, tied to stakes within the sea-mark*, to be devoured gradually with the growing waves, and some of them very young, some of an old age."

This unprincipled statement was published in London in 1687. Prior to the month of April in that year, the author of it had gone to Holland, and was skulking between the nest of rebellion there, and the conspirators in the south and west of Scotland, labouring in the cause of the Prince of Orange, who profited by their services, and then discarded them with contempt. In the paragraph quoted above, a specimen of the "many dreadful lies" which Sir George Mackenzie complains, in his "Vindication," were thus anonymously published, to further the Orange invasion, and poison the minds of the vulgar, we have the *germ* of that which after the Revolution expanded into a grand melodrama of martyrdom. *No woman had been drowned.* But there was an order of Council, that, in the event of a woman being executed, she should be *drowned*, instead of

being hanged or dismembered. *Therefore,* women *were* drowned, and to drown them was a *constant characteristic* of the inhumanity of the Government. Such was the convenient logic of this fanatic, who was not satisfied with falsifying in his text. To catch the vulgar eye, "A Hind Let Loose" is adorned with a frontispiece, as execrable in art as the volume is in morals. There, in one compartment of the wretched engraving, is represented the *dismemberment of a female* on the scaffold,—a scene which *never occurred.* In another compartment, two women are displayed *tied back to back* against the same stake in the sea, which scene *never occurred either.* But even this lie of the graver suffices to prove, that when Alexander Shields promulgated his virulence in 1687, just two years after the pardon of the female saints of the Solway, the elaborate fable as it appears in Wodrow,—who says, "the old woman's stake was a good way in beyond the other, and she was *first dispatched,* in order to *terrify* the other to a compliance," had no existence. Shields, at this time, was neither prepared to describe any such scene, nor to name any woman who had so suffered. As it is, he stands convicted of a gross falsehood, by the positive evidence of Sir George Mackenzie, and the negative evidence of Fountainhall, and *all the public records extant;* and that detection is rendered more complete by the fact, already illustrated, that all the other collections of "grievances and sufferings," concocted in Scotland for the same purpose, and at the same time, by other fanatical calumniators of the Government, afford an exact though involuntary corroboration of Sir George Mackenzie's statement as to the execution of females.

SECTION II.

The first specific allegation of the Drowning of Margaret Lauchlison and Margaret Wilson, traced to another falsehood published by Alexander Shields.

Does any writer whatever, anonymous or otherwise, in the 17th century, assert specifically, that these two women, *Mar-*

garet Lauchlison and *Margaret Wilson*, suffered death by drowning at Wigtown in the year 1685? *Not one*, except Alexander Shields himself, and two pamphleteers of the same stamp, who, in utter ignorance themselves of any such incident having occurred, merely *copied his words*. He did not, indeed, venture to make that *specific* statement in 1687, when, most probably, the two women were known to be alive. But, in 1690, emboldened by the advent of King William, ere which time the women may have died, or become expatriated, he put forth another anonymous pamphlet, based like the rest upon an utter disregard of truth, in which that famous martyrdom makes its *first* appearance.

This obscure and inconsequential performance, entirely disregarded at the time, is entitled,—"A Short Memorial of the *Sufferings* and *Grievances*, past and present, of the Presbyterians in Scotland, particularly of those of them called by nickname Cameronians: Printed in the year 1690." Where published, or by whom, is not stated. The 22d *grievance* contained in this collection, consists of the usual violent tirade against the Governments of the Restoration for alleged cruelties perpetrated upon the people of Scotland, and winds up with this intensely false statement:—

"Thus a great number of *innocent* people have been destroyed without respect to *age or sex*; some *meer boyes* have been for this hanged; some stouping for age; some women also hanged, and *some drowned*, because they could not satisfy the Council, Justiciary Court, and the *souldiours*, with their *thoughts about the Government*."

The public proclamation of the lynch-law of the Conventicles, murder and assassination, followed by practical obedience on the part of armed outlaws, gave rise, as we have seen, to the remedy (whether efficient or politic is not the question), of the *Abjuration Oath*, and its preliminary examinations. This is what is meant by Alexander Shields (himself the great promulgator of those frightful doctrines), when he speaks of the innocent, of whatever age or sex, being tyrannically probed as to "their thoughts about the Government," and then indiscriminately and mercilessly executed. It will be seen that his Memorial of Grievances and Sufferings is identical in character, and of the very same low type, as those we have already

quoted, that were concocted a few years before. In his collection of 1690, however, Shields has afforded a detection of himself which, although too minute and obscure to attract ordinary attention, is very germain to the matter of his truth. The previous collections of the same stamp had said nothing whatever of women having been drowned, and had only very shyly referred to the solitary case of the two women hanged together in 1681. But, while repeating this accusation, in similar terms, in 1690, Shields, it will be observed, boldly *interpolates* the additional accusation of the drowning of women,—"some women also hanged, and *some drowned*,"—an idea never mooted by any one of the many calumnious collectors, who had immediately preceded him in the very same walk of fanatical agitation. And, moreover, at the end of this memorial, there is inserted what Shields entitles, a "List of those who were killed in cold blood, *without trial, conviction*, or *any colour of law*, by the persons underwritten; a *short hint* of those who have been *murdered* since the year 1682, will *suffee* [suffice ?]." Of this list, which assumes the usual conveniently curt form, without an attempt at verification, we venture to affirm, and say advisedly, that there is not one single *item*, that is not either absolutely false, or so devoid in its statement of the spirit of truth and justice, as to be essentially false. Having stated in his "Hind Let Loose," that Government was wont, as a *general characteristic*, to drown women, tied to stakes in the flowing tide, it behoved him to furnish, in this specific list, at least *one* example of the kind. But where to find it? Such a thing had never occurred in Scotland. A humane order, however, had been issued by the Privy Council in 1685, that women, if condemned to death as traitors, were to suffer simply by drowning, and neither to be hanged nor mangled, as might happen to traitors of the other sex. Margaret Lauchlison and Margaret Wilson happened to afford a solitary instance of two females having been so doomed together, under Colonel Douglas's Justiciary Commission at Wigtown. Accordingly Shields, with a truthless effrontery that argues the basest nature, thus framed his example on the subject:—

"*Item:* The said Col. or Lieu.-Gen. James Douglas, together with the laird of Lag, and Captain Winram, most *illegally condemned*, and *most*

inhumanly drowned, at stakes within the sea-mark, two women at Wigtown, viz., *Margaret Lauchlan*, upwards of sixty years, and *Margaret Wilson*, about *twenty* years of age, the foresaid fatal year, 1685." [1]

Fortunately this venom is so brewed as to afford its own antidote. The very terms of it lead to its immediate detection. It is presented as an instance of those who were "killed in cold blood, *without trial, conviction*, or *any colour of law*." But it is absolutely proved that these two women were formally tried by a Royal Commission of Justiciary, and convicted by the verdict of a jury. He says they were "illegally condemned." Margaret Lauchlison's own petition to the Council comes to light, and is found to bear—"I being justly condemned to die, by the Lords Commissioners of his Majesty's most honourable Privy Council and Justiciary, in a Court holden at Wigtown the 13th day of April, instant," &c. He means it to be inferred, that, as the *immediate* consequence of a cruel and illegal condemnation, without a trial at all, the two women were *forthwith* "most inhumanly drowned at stakes within the sea-mark." But it is proved by the public records, that, seventeen days after their trial and condemnation in Wigtown, they were alive in Edinburgh, awaiting the formal confirmation from the Crown of their pardon by the Privy Council Their *murderers*, he says, were Colonel Douglas, Sir Robert Grierson of Lagg, and Captain Winram. But these were all members of the Royal Commission, under which not only were the women tried, but had been allowed to petition the Privy Council for their lives; and those Commissioners were thus manifestly accessory to their reprieve and pardon. Colonel Douglas (the head of that Commission) had, in like manner, at the very same time, been accessory to the

[1] This *item* will be found (by those who can endure such researches), at the foot of the *second* column, p. 35, and head of the *first* column, p. 36, of the pamphlet in question, three copies of which are slumbering in the Advocates' Library. We are thus particular in the reference, having failed to observe the item, though frequently consulting the pamphlet when compiling "Memorials of Dundee." This accidental omission occasioned a faulty note in that work (*Appendix*, vol. iii., p 699), wherein an argument is founded upon the mistaken assumption that the alleged drowning of the Wigtown women is not included in Shield's collection of sufferings, 1690.

reprieve and pardon of the three men condemned at Cumnock, criminals much more likely to be severely dealt with than the two women at Wigtown.

But while this scandalous pamphleteer thus stands convicted of another unmitigated falsehood, by evidence that cannot be questioned, that "short hint" of his just affords additional proof, that no such scene of drowning as that of the Wigtown romance, ever occurred under any circumstances. If it had, there must have been a *true* version of the tragedy of 1685, which could not fail to be notorious over all Scotland in 1690. Now, surely the real story would have been more valuable to this railer than the stupid lie he records. Why, then, did he not record the truth? Just because these was *no true story of drowning to tell.*

That this pamphlet of 1690 was written by the author of "A Hind Let Loose," we learn from Patrick Walker, who, in his life of Peden, refers to the pamphlet by its own peculiar title, and adds that it was "written by famous Master Sheills." As appears from the preface, it had originally been framed for presentation to King William, as a help and directory to the new Government, upon the fond fanatical idea that the Orange dynasty would prove the inauguration of a triumphant Millenium of the Covenant in Scotland, established upon the political views, and Christian principles, of such men as famous Master Shields. The boldness with which this violent fanatic (and a few others with him) thrust himself forward to indoctrinate the new Government, by various written manifestoes of the kind, met with a severe rebuff from King William's General Assembly, convened in October 1690. Patrick Walker (who kept a shop in the High Street as a chapman, or pedlar of such inflammatory wares), complains bitterly of "not one speaking in favour" of one of these venemous papers of Shields, which he had audaciously pressed upon that General Assembly; and he denounces as highly unjust the *recorded* opinion of the Kirk Court (when turning it out of doors), "That it contains several *peremptory, gross mistakes*, unseasonable and impracticable proposals, *uncharitable and injurious reflections.*" Indeed so useless, and dangerous, to the now triumphant Kirk, was this agitator considered, that he was

compelled to cry *peccavi* even before the General Assembly (which Wodrow most disingenuously calls, "coming in heartily at the Revolution"), and to give in "his submission and subjection," whereupon he was "admonished" by the Moderator.

No marvel then, that his "Short Memorial of Sufferings and Grievances," immediately sank into obscurity, and was treated with silent contempt by all but such congenial spirits as Patrick Walker. Doubtless Sir George Mackenzie, who died in London in the spring of 1691, had never set eyes on that rubbish. He had done enough to meet it, in his reply to "A Hind Let Loose." Two pamphleteering zealots, however, caught up from him that falsehood, of the drowning of the women, but only thereby furnished additional evidence of its falsity, by being unable to repeat the story in other words than what Shields had used. In the year 1691 another anonymous pamphlet appeared, entitled, "A Second Vindication of the Church of Scotland," &c. This production too, *more solito*, affords "short hints" of Presbyterian sufferings; and in a slovenly manner thus repeats Alexander Shields, as to the Wigtown tragedy. The commendable caution with which he withholds the *names* of the "murderers," as given by his more unscrupulous author, and the anxious manner in which he guards himself from being held answerable for the truth of the story, is somewhat amusing. The *caveat* occurs in his preface.

"Some gentlemen (whose names, *out of respect to them I forbear to mention*) took two women, Margaret Lauchland and Margaret Wilson, the one of 60, the other of 20 years, and caused them to be tied to a stake within the sea-mark at Wigton, and left them there till the tide overflowed them, and this was done *without any legal trial*, 1685.

"The *truth* of matters of fact asserted in this treatise is *not to be taken from me*, but from those who are my informers. Few of them I pretend to *personal knowledge* of; therefore, not *my veracity* is pledged for them but that of others. If I have here asserted anything that I cannot bring creditable witnesses for, let me be blamed; but if they have deceived, or been deceived (which I hope shall not be found), *I am not to answer for that*."[1]

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[1] It is mentioned in "Presbyterian Eloquence Discovered" (p. 71), that this pamphlet was written by "Mr Rule, who calls himself a Doctor of Medicine, for they never pretended to have any in Divinity." Rule

So this pamphleteer, too, of the year 1691, was, personally, in total ignorance of any great drowning exhibition having occurred at Wigtown in 1685. Manifestly he had never heard of such a thing. And whose "veracity" was here "pledged" for the story? His veracity, whose Paper of Grievances was contemptuously rejected by the General Assembly of King William in 1690, and stands condemned on the Records of that Assembly as containining, "several *peremptory, gross mistakes, uncharitable and injurious reflections.*"

Nor is this all. In 1693, another anonymous pamphleteer (George Ridpath) took the field in a tract (more than usually disreputable, from the gross and sensual indecency, both in matter and expression, of some of its outrageous calumnies) by way of answer to "Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence Discovered."[1] Ridpath, too, has his "catalogue of the *cruel and bloody* laws made by the Scots Prelatists against the Presbyterians, with *instances* of their *numerous murders and other barbarities,*" &c. One "instance" is the martyrdom of the Wigtown women, given as follows:—

"The said Colonel [James Douglas], with the Laird of Lag, and Captain Winram, did *illegally condemn* and *inhumanly drown* Margaret Lauchlan, *upward of sixty* years old, and Margaret Wilson, *about twenty*, at Wigtown, fastening them to stakes within the sea-mark; all this in 1685." (P. 24.)

Here, again, we have nothing but a transcript of the words of Alexander Shields, in his "short hint" of 1690, which hint has been shown to be most viciously false.

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was a Presbyterian hack, but rather a shy one, and inclined to bolt. The author of the *tract* just mentioned, quotes the passage in which Rule declines being responsible for the facts he publishes, and adds, "What can a man believe of a book that's ushered in with such a doubting and contradictory preface?"

[1] "Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence Discovered" is coarse enough; but this arises from the nature of the subject, and it is (for the most part) well substantiated by extraneous proof, though there may be occasional exaggerations. But the answer to it by Wodrow's friend, the London newsvender Ridpath, out-Herods Herod; and is so disgustingly impure, in its calumnies against the Episcopal clergy, as to be utterly incredible; and impossible to quote, even for the purpose of refutation.

SECTION III.

How the falsehood of the drowning of the Women at Wigtown, first published in 1690, *came to be revived in the* 18*th Century, by the Collectors of Sufferings for Wodrow's History.*

We doubt whether any such thing ever was, as the secular *history of a martyrdom*, absolutely true. But we have no doubt whatever that such a thing never was, and never will be, as a *truthful Martyrological History*. As regards Scotland, it is impossible. Law led by romance, or a legal judgment inspired by irregular flashes of prurient sentiment derived from a feminine source, and expounded on erotic principles, would be an incongruity of Jurisprudence not more to be distrusted, than a criminative History, framed out of the passions of turbulent times, by the disciples of a fanatical democracy which had been crushed by the heavier hand of the Executive it defied.

Contemptible as was the clique presided over, in 1690, by the author of "A Hind Let Loose," and which the General Assembly of the Kirk, in that year, extinguished for ever, without an effort and without a blush, it was the true exponent of the politics and the polemics to which that now really Venerable Assembly owes its original elevation, indeed, its very existence, and also its present pollarded condition. In 1690 Alexander Shields was the consistent exponent of the principles of John Knox in the murder of Cardinal Beaton: the exponent of the regime of Argyle in the murder of Montrose: the exponent of the last great success of that same regime in the murder of Archbishop Sharp: the exponent of the system of Cameron, Cargill, and Renwick, with whom intolerant anarchy was Christian government, and brutal assassination eternal justice. * Upon this very ladder it was that the Prince of Orange ascended to the throne of Scotland, and then kicked from under him the rotten and gory structure. So, Alexander Shields and his disciples (the last joint of the

rump of the old Argyle regime), reduced to the lowest ebb of agitation, betook themselves to the old resource of virulent pamphleteering, in which truth never formed an ingredient. To the ripening liberties of the country, ripening under the dispensations of Providence evolving good out of evil, in spite of, but never by means of, the Scotch Covenant, the expiring struggles of that regime did little harm. But it engendered an *incubus* upon the History of Scotland, and a gross libel upon the character of the nation,—"Wodrow's History of the Sufferings of the Church." Shaken off by the Orange Government in Scotland, like a too familiar *pediculus* crawling upon the new royal Presbyterian robe, Alexander Shields migrated to the West Indies, where he died in 1700. The reverend Robert Wodrow was worthy to succeed him as the chronicler of Kirk "Sufferings and Grievances."

Wodrow's voluminous correspondence with his fanatical friends early in the eighteenth century is full of groans at the strong national predilection for Episcopalian Church government then manifesting itself throughout Scotland, and at the sinful toleration thereof by the Orange Government. This old leaven of the tyrannical spirit of the Covenant, with which Shields had failed to inoculate King William, found a vent in raking "Sufferings and Grievances" out of the choked and ruined conduits of the Covenant, and inflating the bitter anonymous pamphlets of the "rabblers" of the Episcopal clergy into a *monstrum horrendum ingens* of that peculiar stamp of Church history. The star of Wodrow burst upon the world in the shape of two lumbering folios, the first volume appearing in 1721, and the second in 1722. For a long time this gigantic and clamorous libel was unhonoured in the republic of letters, indeed, of no account whatever, save with a sect who were willing to believe that the dead made a sign, or a cow spoke, if Wodrow said so. It was disregarded in England until Fox's posthumous fragment, professing to be a history of the early part of the reign of James II., was published in 1808. Sir Walter Scott, in 1818, speaks of "the historian Wodrow, whom Mr Fox introduced to the knowledge of the English, raising the price of his two ponderous volumes from ten shillings to two or three guineas." But,

verily, there never was a certificate of character less valuable than Fox's *imprimatur for the nonce* on Wodrow's History. Let us trace its history, which may be said to involve the history of the romance of the Wigtown martyrdom. The first ominous note of it is sounded in a letter from Wodrow to one "Mr John Cross, merchant in Glasgow," dated March 13, 1711:—

"The *task*[1] you prescribe me is what I reckon very seasonable at this juncture, and what within a little time I hope to be in a *better case for* than I am at present, if *some collections*[2] that are at present making were put in my hands. But in this matter, of an exact collection of the sufferings of the Presbyterians, especially in the five western shires, that were to be made a hunting field in the late reign, we are too late by twenty years.[3] Yet I am persuaded there may, and I hope will be, as much { gathered[4] / recovered } as may put the *Prelatists* to blush when they speak of their persecutors,[5] and discover to the world that the barbarities in Scotland from the 1660–88, have no parallel except those exercised in France, by a friend of these persons that make such a *pother* anent *Presbyterian* persecution; and if I be not much mistaken, there will be many *singularities* found in the *Prelatic* persecution that exceed even that of France."

Nevertheless, two years and a half after the date of this letter, we find Wodrow still groping for his "singularities"

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[1] Dr M'Crie (the biographer of Knox), who edited (for the Wodrow Society) this among many other letters of Wodrow preserved in the Advocates' Library, prints the word *task* "talk." It is distinctly *task* in the original. The learned Doctor, as we shall find, had altogether overlooked the point of this letter.

[2] Collections of "Sufferings in the late times," about which the parish ministers again busied themselves in 1710–11, in their different districts, and which scheme produced the suffering of the two Wigtown martyrs. Of this afterwards.

[3] But the collectors, who commenced their task immediately after the date of the Wigtown martyrdom, and yet *omitted* that "suffering," appear to have been *too soon for the purpose.*

[4] This various reading of the important idea is written in that double form in Wodrow's own draft or transcript of the letter.

[5] This refers to the brutal "rabbling" of all the respectable clergy in the disturbed districts of Scotland, by the conventicle-excited Presbyterian mob, when military protection was suddenly withdrawn from Scotland, and the country left to the mercy of fanatics and false statesmen, at the commencement of the Revolution.

that were to cause the Prelatists to blush, and seemingly still unfurnished with that grandest of all his singularities, the melo-drama of martyrdom at Wigtown. In a letter to one Mr Robert Wylie, dated September 26, 1713, he writes as follows:—

"Nothing has come to me (or to the Principal [*Carstares*] before his going to Court) *anent the Sufferings*. If any thing be come to your hand, I'll be glad to know. I wish you would entertain thoughts of giving *some beginning* to some account of this nature. For me, I can fall on *no shape*, and have *not so much as a thread of these times in my head*."

Upon this remarkable passage Dr M'Crie notes as follows:—"This is the first time that we find any *decided allusion* made by Wodrow to the project of writing a History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland, and it is curious to observe how little idea he then had of the vast undertaking which he was afterwards to accomplish." Curious enough. Being quite untrammelled, however, by scrupulosity as to facts, that obstacle was soon overcome. But the learned biographer of Knox had here committed a slip in his editorial functions. Wodrow's allusion to that project is just as decided in his letter to Mr John Cross, dated two years and a half earlier. It is indeed curious to find him, after that lapse of time, still confessing that he could fall on no shape, and had not a thread of those times in his memory or his mind. It is no less curious to observe how rapidly he went ahead in his "vast undertaking," when once the gathering ball was set a-rolling. On the 11th of January 1714, he thus writes to "Lt.-Colonel Erskine."

"I have this night scribbled out a very rude and imperfect sketch of *our Sufferings*, the length of *Pentland*, from what papers and materials I could have access to. I find it *swell on my hand*, far beyond the first design of a *short pamphlet to spread among the country people*," &c. "I think there are materials, in my *confused collection*, that may be of use to any person of qualifications suited to this task, which I am very sensible I want; and if such a person can be prevailed with to undertake it, I shall very readily communicate what I have. Indeed, the more I dip into the *scandalous methods* of that time, the more I lament our want of a History of the *unparalleled practices* under the reigns of the two brothers, with relation to this poor Church. I resolve, if the Lord will, to go on in my *rude collections* such as they are, and, as I threated in my last, I send you this."

Saintly sufferings of this sort, thus wished for and thus fished for, very soon "swell on the hand," and "threads of these times" quickly festooned the brains of our brave martyrologist. On the 26th of August 1714, he thus writes to one Mr James Hart:—

"I have *completed* my first book of the History of the Sufferings in the late times, from the *Restoration*, to *Pentland*; and drawn the first draught of the second, from *Pentland*, to *Bothwell Bridge*; which is like I may either send or bring in to you and friends at Edinburgh. I reckon this great turn of affairs[1] renders this account very necessary and seasonable, though I am a very unfit hand to essay it. If any thing I could collect may be materials to another in case to go through with that necessary design, I shall reckon my little pains well bestowed."

But Wodrow had as little intention of giving up the task for which he was so peculiarly well fitted, as any one else had of taking it out of his hands. On the 11th of October 1714, he thus writes to "Mr William Forbes, Professor of Law at Glasgow:—

"I send you the first draught of the first six years of our Sufferings," &c. "I could heartily wish you took Sir George Mackenzie's remarks, on the Government of King Charles the Second, in task. I have an answer to it, published in London, but it's lame."[2]

In the following month, November 25, he thus unbosoms himself to "the Rev. Mr John Anderson, minister at Dumbarton," another cook to whom he had sent a portion of his *magnum opus* for revisal:—

"By your kind pains to correct and amend it, you truly encouraged me more to go on than any thing I yet met with since I entered upon it. Your good wishes to so necessary a work have made you pass by far a too favourable judgment on this first book in your letter. I own the further I go on, I see the more necessity for somewhat on this head; and if any thing I can cast together upon this head, may be of use when corrected by you and others, I shall not reckon my pains altogether lost; and nothing but a conviction of our negligence since the Revolution, and the ill consequences of it, made me, last winter, venture to give a kind of beginning to it, *almost in a fret*. My hand is ill; my style and *syllabication* have given you a great deal of trouble; *my head is worst of all*; and I have *few or no materials* sent me. However, I'll endeavour to go through with it as I can, if the Lord spare me," &c.

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[1] Death of Queen Anne, and Accession of George I.

[2] Sir George Mackenzie's "Vindication," and the Answer to it, mentioned before.

Another letter is to that redoubtable character, King William's Scotch *factotum*, Carstares, who of course would lend his aid *con amore* to such a scheme as libelling the Government under which he himself had so justly suffered, but to which suffering he owed his life, his fame, and his fortune. On the 14th of June 1715, Wodrow thus writes to him :—

"The more I *dip* into that *dreadful time*, the greater the necessity I see of a *well vouched* account of it. I am truly sorry I should have been put upon the giving a beginning to a design of this nature; who was not born when many of these cruelties was acted, and have *no thread to lead me* to any enquiries into them;[1] and wish heartily it had been engaged in by any other. But since I am entered on it, and cannot say I want matter could I shape it right, I am going as far as my materials will carry me, and shall lay my rude draught before you and others, and be entirely directed what to do."

In his first letter on the subject, in 1711 (that overlooked by Dr M'Crie), it will be observed that Wodrow expresses a desire, while admitting the blank condition of his own mind as regards his project, that "some collections that are *at present making* were put in my hands." This allusion is explained in another letter of his, addressed to the Rev. John M'Bride, minister at Belfast, and dated June 21, 1715, wherein he affords this curious information :—

"Before you left this country, we were, in our *Synods and Assemblies*, talking of *collections* for a History of the Sufferings of this Church under Prelacy. *I was pitched upon to receive them*, and a very few accounts came to my hands; and I had some things, relative to that head, among the papers I had gathered together *for my own diversion*.[2] It was thought necessary a beginning should be given to an account of our sufferings; and some papers being in my hand, and others promised me, I was, through my own easiness, and the importunity of others, last year (1714) put upon drawing a first draught of this work, in itself so necessary, and so much wanted. None can regret this business falling into my hands more than I do myself. But, as it's usual in things of this nature, every body was willing to roll the labour and toil of it off themselves; and my excess of good nature, which brought me through importunity to essay a

[1] Wodrow was born in 1679; and, as already noticed, his father and his father-in-law were conventicle leaders.

[2] Some of those collections of "grievances and sufferings," doubtless, between 1660 and 1688, written to promote the advent of the Prince of Orange, and which *are all silent* on the subject of the drowning of the women at Wigtown, as we have shown.

beginning to it, has now engaged me, and I must, *some way or other*, wrestle through the first rude draught of it. When I went into the Assembly, I very luckily fell upon the *Registers of our Privy Council*, in the hands of *private persons*, and there indeed I met with a *black scene*. The looking over of these kept me some while in Edinburgh, after the Assembly was up. And I am promised access to the books of our Justiciary. Materials are now swelling pretty much on my hand, and I am like to have work enough to put them in any kind of order. I have now brought my accounts down to the beginning of the 1685,[1] from the Restoration, where I begin."

Thus was Wodrow's History conceived, and born, and nourished. It was not, as Dr M'Crie was pleased to consider it, a vast historical undertaking. It was a mean conspiracy, of a fanatical sect, against the truth, justice, and common sense of History. It was that same historical undertaking, which, for a century and a half, imposed upon History, as an incontrovertible fact, the intense falsehood (among many others), that Colonel Graham of Claverhouse, the most aristocratic gentleman, the most chivalrous captain, the most clear-minded statesman of his time, did, with his own hand and pistol, and in presence of the royal troops he was commanding, blow out the brains of a pious, industrious, and inoffensive peasant, and that because his own regiment (devoted to himself) had *mutinied* on the spot against what even they considered a savage and murderous order. To "dip into that dreadful time," meant with Wodrow a species of *dipping* which may be not inaptly illustrated by reference to a pamphlet published not a hundred years ago, and entitled, "Great Demonstration at Sanquhar, on twenty-second July 1860, in commemoration of the Declaration published at the Cross by Richard Cameron, on the

[1] The recorded reprieve of the Wigtown women is contained in a volume of the Register fairly written, and in excellent condition. It can be *proved* that it was a *bound volume* when Wodrow got access to it, although the binding has been renewed in later times. By his own showing, Wodrow had access to it, and remained in Edinburgh "looking over" these records, *before* he had written his romance of the Wigtown martyrs. Moreover, it can be proved, from his own History, that *he consulted*, and *quoted*, the registered proceedings of the Privy Council of 30th April 1685 (the date of the reprieve), in reference to another matter than the reprieve, and in illustration of a section of his History which occurs *before* the section containing his romance. See note on this subject in "Memorials of Dundee," vol. ii. p. 77.

twenty-second June 1680." Upon this memorable occasion, Professor Blackie blazed off like a rocket of Greek-fire, and we may believe their zealous chronicler when he says—"The learned Professor of Greek in the University of Edinburgh, standing on the broken wall of a crumbling feudal fortress, discoursing on the men of the Covenant to the people of Nithsdale, was a *unique* and interesting sight." But the speech of the occasion was from a gentleman holding her Majesty's commission: "Colonel Shaw of Ayr, having been introduced by Provost Whigham," said—"He read of Claverhouse, and he wanted words to express the *loathing and contempt* he entertained for that *miserable military scavenger*, who was *no soldier and no gentleman*. He could not *dip his tongue in a cesspool vile and filthy enough to paint his character*. As respects Claverhouse and Charles II., he might say, like master like man; for the King was the vile slave of his own lusts, a *miserable brothel-keeper*, who ought not to have been allowed to live, but should have been *strangled at his birth*." Here is language more "delirious" than any used by us in "Memorials of Dundee," or by Principal Tulloch in Macmillan's Magazine. This hideous, but in our day harmless, raising of the ghost of the treasonable and truculent "Sanquhar Declaration," reminds one of a turnip-lantern spectre in a country kirk-yard. But it exhibits at once the type, and the far-reaching poison in Scotland, of Shields' "Hind Let Loose," and Wodrow's History.

SECTION IV.

How the Romance of the drowning of the Women at Wigtown was first concocted in the Parish of Kirkinner, in Galloway, and recorded by its Kirk-Session.

The idea of promulgating violent and false accusations against the fallen dynasty, by the parochial system of collecting sufferings, had, as we have seen, been adopted for some

years before Wodrow was installed receiver-general thereof, and grand martyrologist for Scotland. The system was not original with the Presbyterian ministers of 1710. Their prototypes were *Napthali*, and *A Hind Let Loose*, and also that class of bitter pamphleteers who came out in shoals at the dawn of the Orange dynasty, which was their brightest sunshine. It is to such sources that Wodrow's disreputable friend, and London correspondent, George Ridpath, refers him, for the basis of his history, in a letter containing the following advice:—"I need not hint, that there are *great helps* to be had in the *Apologetical Relation; Napthali;* the *True Nonconformists; Jus Populi;* the *Hind Let Loose;* and other accounts of those named *Cameronians;* though the latter should be touched with great caution." The parochial process of collecting was ingenious and certain of success. Starting with the postulate, that the Governments of the Restoration had followed one undeviating course and progress of injustice, oppression, and cruelty, opposed to patriotic integrity, Christian sanctity, and rural innocence, every statement or story was at once received, and adopted for truth, whatever the source, if only it were sufficiently defamatory to illustrate with effect the great mother calumny. Accordingly, the ladle was sent round all the "suffering" parishes, by order of the tribunals of the Kirk, collecting this species of contribution chiefly from aged men and women, who were invalids and paupers. But all were expected to contribute a suffering, however small, to this grand *commination* against the fallen dynasty. The head-collector was the minister of the parish. What old mumper could withstand the minister? Out of blindness, deafness, doitedness, crabbedness, and coughing, he extracted (inspired by zeal in the cause), whatever he wanted, and cooked it as he fancied. If ever there was a device better suited than another for promoting a system of false and calumnious history, it was this universal and hasty raking of all the common sewers of fanaticism for the discovery of some unknown quantity of sufferings. We must limit our illustrations of the *modus operandi* to instances afforded by the records of two neighbouring parishes. But they are very germain to the matter in hand, the one being *Kirkinner*, the parish of *old* Margaret

Lauchlison, the other *Penninghame*, the parish of *dear* Margaret Wilson, both in the county of Wigtown. In the original Session-book of the parish of Kirkinner, now preserved in the General Register House, we discovered the following instructive passages, which had hitherto escaped observation :—

"Januarie 15, 1710.—There being a *generall design throw the nation*,[1] to have a history of the late sufferings of the *People of God*, and every Session within this national Church being *desired* to gett *weel attested* informations of the *godly's sufferings* within their bounds, which each Session is to record, extract, and carry in the extract to the Presbyterie; it's recommended to each member to *gather* and *prepare* their best informations of these things *against our next*. Sederunt closed with prayer."

The next entry on the subject is just *twenty-one days* thereafter; not very ample time, one would think, to "gather and prepare well attested informations" of the godly's sufferings within their bounds. However, here it is :—

"Februarie 5, 1710.—Ane account of the sufferings of *honest people* in this paroch was *given in and read:* If there be *anything to add*, the several members are to inform themselves, and then all is to be recorded together, that the Presbyterie may have an attested extract of all."

The grand result does not appear on this record until more than a whole twelvemonth after the above notices. Having examined the Kirkinner register very carefully, we can affirm there is no mistake as to dates. "January 15, 1710," is the date of the first recommendation to "gather and prepare," and this to be done "against our next." The next sederunt of the Session is, "February 5, 1710;" at which time "an account is given in and read," but nothing recorded, the order being for a *renewed search*. The sederunts, of the register for this year, run on to the last, held, "November 27, 1710." Then come the sederunts of January 14, February 15, March 18, of the following year 1711. The next sederunt is "April 15, 1711," when the collected sufferings are for the first time *recorded*. And now old *Margaret Lauchlison* at last comes to the surface, and is tabled as a martyr. Her case forms the

[1] A very false mode of putting it. The design was only general among the Presbyterian ministers.

leading and most important of Kirkinner's *gathered and prepared* sufferings, and is thus recorded:—

"Aprile 15, 1711.—*The minister* gave in the account of the sufferings of honest godly people, in the *late times*, which was read, and is as follows:—

"*Margaret Laughlison*, of known integrity and piety from her youth, aged about *eighty*,[1] widow of John Millikin, wright in Drumjargan, was, *in or about* the year of God 1685, in her own house taken off her knees in prayer, and carried immediatly to prison, and from one prison to anôther, without the benefit of light to read the Scriptures, was barbarously treated *by dragoons*, who were sent to carry her from Machirmore to Wigtoun, and being sentenced by *Sir Robert Grier of Lagg* to be drowned att a stake within the flood-mark, just below the town of Wigtoun, for *conventicle keeping and alledged rebellion*, was, *according to the said sentence*, fixed to the stake till the tide made, and *held down within the water by one of the town officers*, by his halbert at her throat, till she died."

This account, which has hitherto remained entirely latent, won't suit the worshippers of the Wigtown Martyrs. The "young maiden of eighteen," *Margaret Wilson*, the *Prima Donna* of that water-opera, is *not there!* This is not Wodrow's story; not Lord Macaulay's story; not the story that the world has. The minister had taken more than a whole twelvemonth to "gather and prepare" this story, and lo! it is *not the story*. Where is "*dear* Margaret Wilson," with her bible, and her psalm-book, and her pretty, graceful, winning, "edifying" ways? Had the minister of Kirkinner, in a twelvemonth's time, gathered nothing about her? Or having *gathered* the story in all the fulness of its rich details, had he *prepared* this finest tragedy of the troubles, the very Hamlet of our Martyrologies, so stupidly as to *omit the part of Ophelia?* But let us see how they pretend to verify this mutilated martyrdom.

To the *drôwning* suffering, the leading and most extraordinary case in this Kirkinner catalogue, no attestation whatever is specially attached. But of this suffering, *inter alia*, "the minister gave in the account." What manner of man this minister was, and what manner of men practically composed

[1] Her own petition, of which these gatherers and preparers were *utterly ignorant*, gives her age as "*about* three score and ten."

this parochial kirk-session, or really had to do with this rude entry, no man alive can tell, though some may guess.[1] The fact that it was a *minister* and a *kirk-session* of the garden of Scotch martyrologies, in the year 1710, who agreed to hold this record *for the truth*, may cast suspicion upon it, but can afford no proof. The character of such Presbyterial tribunals at that period, dealing with such stories for such a purpose, will only be accounted a sufficient voucher by those who are nervously anxious that such stories should not be proved false, or who are altogether uninformed as to the ways and means of Presbyterian government and dictation in those days. *Where or how* the minister got this rambling story of Margaret Lauchlison, is not said. No other or more precise record of the facts is referred to. No formal precognition is recorded, or pretended to have been taken. No certificate, or information by any eye-witness, is pretended to be forthcoming. But the *whole list* given in by the minister is *generally* approved of, and formally attested, by the following entry in the record, of that same date,—which attestation is as careful as possible *not to particularize* in the application :—

"The which *particulars aforesaid* being read, they [the Kirk-session], *partly* from *credible information, partly* from their own *personal knowledge*, doe *belive* the *said informations* to be *matter of fact;* and appoint the same to be recorded in their Session-book, *ad futuram rei memoriam;* and the clerk is to give *extract* to the Presbyterie of Wigtoun, according to appointment. Sederunt closed with prayer."

But attest, or believe, as they might, their "matter of fact," as regards Margaret Lauchlison at least, was *not* matter of fact. She was *not* sentenced for "conventicle keeping," but for refusing to take the Oath of Abjuration. She may have been *sentenced* by Sir Robert Grierson of Lagg, sitting along with at least two other Lords Commissioners at Wigtown ; but it is *not true*, what the minister's story clearly imports, that the old woman was forthwith taken and drowned "according to the said sentence." Of that accusation Sir Robert Grierson is fully acquitted *by the old woman herself.* Between her

[1] Dr Tulloch, in his article in Macmillan's Magazine, bestows a very high character upon them, *for the nonce.* We would like to know how that character is verified.

sentence, and whatever mode of release from this world's cares it pleased God finally to bestow upon her, there occurred her petition to the Privy Council, her transmission to Edinburgh, her taking the Oath of Abjuration, and her consequent *pardon.* Dr Tulloch's device of a *subsequent* "high-handed outrage by provincial agents," won't save this kirk-session. The *town-officer and his halbert,* in that minister's story, is there referred to as part of the machinery of the *Executive,* in a case where tyrannical judgment was immediately followed by merciless execution. The proved facts, of the petition and pardon, and the violent theory of *lynch-law* by some *officials of the Government,* manifestly had never entered either the knowledge, or the imagination, of this minister or his session. They meant to record a Government prosecution, a judicial condemnation, and a Government execution. Now, from whatever source *gathered,* by whatever hand *prepared,* the Kirk-session of Kirkinner thereby stand convicted of having solemnly attested for truth, "*in perpetuam rei memoriam,*" and sealed with prayer, an *abominable falsehood.*

SECTION V.

How the Romance of the Drowning of the Women at Wigtown was expanded into its present dimensions for the first time in the Session-book of the Parish of Penninghame.

Wodrow makes no reference to the Session-book of Kirkinner, or to its minister. But he tells us:—"I shall mostly give my narrative of it" (the martyrdom in question), "from *an account* I have from the fore-mentioned Mr Rowan, *now with the Lord,* late minister of *Penninghame,* where Margaret Wilson lived, who was at pains to have its circumstances fully vouched by witnesses, *whose attestations are in my hands.*" This jesuitical mode of stating his authorities, extremely characteristic of Wodrow, means no more than this, that he had obtained an extract, certified by Mr Rowan, acting as clerk, from the Session-book of *Penninghame,* of precisely the same

kind and character as that which we have quoted from *Kirkinner*, except that, in Mr Rowan's hands, the melo-dramatic tragedy had become fully developed in all its martyrological glory. This Session-book is still preserved in the parish of Penninghame, not having been removed to the Register House in Edinburgh, where that of Kirkinner now is. There was printed, however, at Newton-Stewart, in 1826, "Extract from the Session-book of the parish of Penninghame." This contains, *inter alia*, a long history, domestic and martyrological, of the two Wigtown sufferers, but more especially of the family and sufferings of the "maiden of eighteen," whom the minister of Kirkinner had failed to find, or, more strangely still, had omitted to notice. We learn from Wodrow that the Penninghame story was gathered and prepared by his friend Mr Robert Rowan, minister of that parish, who primed him therewith for his own history of the martyrdom. Having no reason to doubt that the Newton-Stewart publication is a faithful and accurate transcript from the original record, we shall give it here as the *Penninghame* version, which Wodrow had transferred to his pages very nearly *verbatim*. The following minute of Session, dated 15th February 1711 (as extracted in the Newton-Stewart print), discloses the instructions upon which the parish minister had proceeded:—

"The General Assembly, and their Commission, having recommended it to Presbyteries, to cause an exact account of the sufferings of people in every paroch, for their adherence to the *covenanted* work of reformation, in opposition to the late *Erastian Prelacy*, to be collected by Sessions, with the best documents and attestation of them that can be had by the respective Sessions, and the Presbytery having frequently recommended the same,—the minister presented a collection of the *sufferings* given up to him by *the persons best acquainted with them*, which being read, the Session informs of *several material things that are wanting*, and orders them to be insert and presented. *Sederunt* closed with prayer."

It would appear that, upon this occasion, too, the minister had been sent to *try again*, and that accordingly he had produced a second batch, which was added to the former; and then, on the 25th February 1711, the following is minuted:—

"The particulars that *were wanting*, in the account of the sufferings of people under the late Prelacy, *being insert in the former account*, all was produced and read: the tenor whereof follows."

After a variety of less important sufferings with which the record commences, we come to that destined to constitute the very pink of Scotch martyrology :—

" Gilbert Wilson in Glenvernoch, in Castlestewart's land, being a man to *ane excesse conform* to the guise of the tymes, and his wife *without challenge for her religion*, in a good condition as to worldly things, with a great stock on a large ground (*fitt to be a prey*), was harassed *for his children* who *would not conform*. They being required to take the test, and hear the Curats, refused both, were searched for, fled, and lived in the wild mountains, bogs, and caves. Their parents were charged on their highest peril, that they should neither *harbour them, speak, supplie them, nor see them ;* and the contrey people were obliged by the terror of the laws, to pursue them, as weal as the souldiers, with *hue and cry*."

" In February 1685, Thomas Wilson, of *sixteen years of age*, Margaret Wilson of *eighteen years*, Agnes Wilson of *thirteen years*, children to the said Gilbert: The said Thomas, keeping the mountains, his two sisters, Margaret and Agnes, went *secretly to* Wigtoun to see some friends, were there discovered, taken prisoners, and *instantly thrust into the thieves hole*, as the greatest malefactors, whence they were sometymes brought up to the Tolbooth after a considerable tyme's imprisonment, where several others were prisoners for the like causes. Particularly ane *Margaret M'Lachland of Kirkinner paroch*, a woman of sixty-three years of age.

" After their imprisonment for some considerable tyme, Mr David Graham Shireff, the Laird of Lagg, Major Winram, Captain Strachan, called ane assize, indicted these *three women*, viz. Margaret M'Lauchland, Margaret Wilson, Agnes Wilson, to be guilty of the *Rebellion at Bothwell-bridge*, *Airds-mosse*, *twenty field conventicles*, and *twenty house conventicles:* Yet it was weel known that none of these *women* ever were within twenty miles of Bothwell, or Airds-mosse ; and *Agnes* Wilson, being *eight years of age* at the time of Airds-mosse, could not be deep in rebellion then ; nor her sister of *thirteen* years of age, and *twelve* years at Bothwell Bridge its tyme. The assize did sit, and brought them in guilty, and the Judges sentenced them to be tyed to palisados fixed in the sand, within the flood mark of the sea, and there to stand till the flood overflowed them, and drowned them.

" They received their sentence without the least discouragement, with a *composed smiling countenance*, judging it their honour to suffer for Christ's Truth, that he is alone King and Head of his Church. Gilbert Wilson forsaid got his youngest daughter, *Agnes Wilson*, out of prison, upon his bond of *ane hundreth pounds sterling* to produce her when called for, *after the sentence of death passed against* her ; but was obliged to go to Edinburgh for this before it could be obtained. The time they were in prison, no means were unessayed with *Margaret Wilson* to persuade her to take the Oath of Abjuration, and *hear the Curats*, with threatenings and flattery, but *without any success.*

" Upon the 11th day of May, 1685, these *two women*, Margaret M'Lachland and Margaret Wilson, were brought forth to execution.

They did put the old woman first into the water, and when the water was overflowing her, they asked Margaret Wilson what she thought of her in that case? She answered, 'What do I see but Christ wrestling there; think ye that we are the sufferers? No, it is Christ in us, for he sends none a warfare on their own charges.' Margaret Wilson sang psalm 25, from the 7th verse, red the 8th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and did pray, and then *the water covered her.* But before her breath was quite gone, they pulled her up, and held her till she could speak, and then asked her if she would pray for the King? She answered, that *she wished the salvation of all men, but the damnation of none.* Some of her *relations* being on the place, cried out, '*She is willing to conform,*'—being desirous to save her life at any rate. Upon which *Major Winram offered the Oath of Abjuration to her*, either to swear it, or to return to the water. She refused it, saying,—'*I will not, I am one of Christ's children, let me go.*' And then they returned her into the water, being a virgin martyr of *eighteen* years of age, suffering death for her refusing to swear the Oath of Abjuration, and *hear the Curats.*

"The said Gilbert Wilson was fined for the *opinion of his children*, harassed with frequent quarterings of souldiers upon him, sometimes ane hundreth men at once, who lived at discretion on his goods, and that for *several years together*, and his frequent attendance on the Courts at Wigtown, almost every week, at thirteen miles distance, *for three years time*, riding to Edinburgh on these accounts, so that his losses could not be reckoned; and estimat (without doubt) not within five thousand merks; yet for *no principle or action or actions of his own*, and died in great poverty lately. A few years hence, his wife, a very aged woman, lived upon the charity of friends; his son, Thomas, lived to bear arms under King William, in Flanders, and the Castle of Edinburgh; but had nothing by his parents to enter the ground which they possessed; where he lives *to certifie the truth* of these things, with *many others* who know them too well."

To verify *specifically* this unique mixture of the marvellous, and the nonsensical, there is, as may well be supposed, not an attempt. But at the conclusion of the record, the *whole catalogue* of sufferings, has this *general* attestation applied to it:—

"The Session having considered *all the above particulars*, and having certain knowledge of the truth of the *most part of them*, from *their own sufferings*, and eye-witnesses of the foresaid sufferings *of others*, which several of the Session *declares*, and from certain information of *others*, in the very tyme and place they were acted in, and many living that have *all these things* fresh in their memory; except of these things concerning Gilbert Milroy, the truth whereof *they think* there is no ground to doubt of: They do *attest* the same, and orders ane extract to be given in their name to the Presbytery, to transmit to superior Judicatories. *Sederunt closed with prayer.*"[1]

[1] This Penninghame record is entitled,—"A brief Information of the

The value, as an *attestation*, of this extraordinary specimen of fanatical mystification, we intend to bring to the test in a subsequent section. Meanwhile we may here point to it, as throwing some light upon that deceptive statement in Wodrow's narrative, that his friend the minister "was at pains to have the circumstances fully vouched by witnesses, *whose attestations are in my hands.*" Nothing of the kind is to be found in any volume of Wodrow's collections. Manifestly this means neither more nor less than the *general attestation* at the conclusion of the Session record, which, so far from being an "attestation by witnesses," has not even a special reference, *quantum valeat*, to the drowning tragedy at Wigtown. If there were such attestations by eye-witnesses, we ask, *where are they*, and *who were the witnesses?* If there were any eye-witnesses at all, to that fearful scene, there must have been *hundreds*. Was there *not one*, then, to attest it to the reverend David Williamson, who was collecting such sufferings *immediately after the event?*

Wodrow, justly suspicious that his narrative may not be credited, gives some account of the rebel wanderings, in after life, of young Thomas Wilson; and adds, that he "*lives now* in his father's room, and is *ready to attest all I am writing.*" But we are by no means prepared to admit that Thomas Wilson really *was ready to attest* any thing at all, merely because Wodrow is so bold as to say so in his loose and jesuitical manner. The Session record had phrased it more cautiously,—"where he lives *to certifie* the truth of these things,"—the *precise things*, not being specified. It is not easy to appreciate the extent, or value of an attestation that was *never made*. But even supposing that the Orange rebel, as Wodrow describes him, had actually attested the fate of his sister as nar-

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sufferings of people which are most remarkable in the parish of Peninghame, within the shire of Wigtown, upon the account of their adherence to the Reformation of the Church of Scotland, and their refusing to conform with Prelacie, with the occasions of their trouble, especiallie from the year 1679 to the year 1689." It will be seen that these *collectors* in the year 1711, are just imitators of the collectors in 1687, whose papers we disclosed in Part I. (see before pp. 64-68), and none of which papers contain any notice whatever of this wonderful Wigtown martyrdom in 1685.

rated by the martyrologist, it would just come to this, that Thomas Wilson had attested for truth that which is *proved to be false*, as did the Kirk-sessions of Kirkinner and Penninghame.

SECTION VI.

Principal Tulloch's Theory of Embellishments.

Dr Tulloch speaks of this story having been told "with a rude but touching *picturesqueness* by Wodrow;" and, "by Lord Macaulay in our own day in one of the most graphic and impressive passages of his History of England." But neither of these authors have the slightest merit in the composition, if any merit there be. Lord Macaulay's impressive passage is just a garbled extract from Wodrow; and Wodrow's "picturesqueness" is just a *verbatim* extract from the Session-book of Penninghame, given him by the minister. It is of more importance to observe, however, that we have taught the Chair of St Andrews University to see, and even brought it to say, that, picturesque or grotesque, Wodrow's story is *not true*. Mark how, *me ipso duce*, the Head of St Mary's demolishes both Wodrow and Macaulay, and martyrologies in general, in the following passage of the Macmillan philippic:—

"Such is the well-known Wigtown martyrology.[1] Like many other martyrologies, it has *evidently*[2] been surrounded with a *considerable portion of fictitious embellishment*. It is not likely that the martyr scene was so *entirely edifying* as represented in the pages of Wodrow. The picturesque adjuncts surrounding the young sufferer—the 'maiden of eighteen'—are plainly touched by the imaginative pathos that grows *naturally* out of any such time of Christian suffering and persecution. Every one who knows any thing of martyrologies, knows how inevitably they gather to themselves such picturesque touches, and especially *such*

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[1] May we take the liberty to suggest that it is a *martyrdom*, not a *martyrology*?

[2] How long has this been considered "evident?"

pieces of edifying discourse as the sayings attributed to Margaret Wilson.[1] There is not a martyrology in the early Church—to take the purest examples—that does not present something of the same phenomena. Who believes that the martyrdom of Polycarp, or of the Lyonnese martyrs, or of the Carthagenian maiden Perpetua, happened exactly as they have been depicted to us by Church tradition? All who study these *beautiful old stories*, with any critical eye, are forced at once to allow the *admixture* of picturesque and edifying matter they contain. It is the *rule* of this sort of literature to become impregnated in its descent by the *imaginative fertility* of the *consciousness of the time*, and still more, of the immediately succeeding time, which learns to look back with a reverend wonder and love to the tragic events which made heroic the former days. The Wigtown martyrology is certainly no exception to this rule. Wodrow's stories *everywhere bear the stamp of this imaginative development.* But are Wodrow and his authorities therefore *liars;* and the Wigtown martyrology a mere imposture from beginning to end—a calumnious fable, as it has been *politely* termed? Were the two women *never at all* drowned at Wigtown?"

Must we also submit to have dust thrown in our eyes from the ruins of our once famous St Andrews after this fashion? Never mind Polycarp and the Carthagenian maiden Perpetua. A truce with those "beautiful old stories." The story of Margaret Wilson is just as beautiful, but it will not be our fault if it ever live to be as old. We answer that last question in the affirmative. *Yes*—the two women were drowned at Wigtown, never at all, at all. We said, and do say, that it is a *calumnious fable* from beginning to end. But we never said so until we had *proved* it. It is the polished Principal who speaks of "liars." Give us our own language, at least, bad as it is. Wodrow was a muddle-headed Scotch martyrologist, imposing upon himself, easily imposed upon by others in such matters, and ever willing to be so. Thus he came to impose upon Scotland. Our Doctor of Divinity, however, has at last discovered that Wodrow's story of this martyrdom "has *evidently* been surrounded with a *considerable* amount of *fictitious embellishment.*" But that is not all Wodrow's doing. It appertains to the Penninghame Session-book, and to the accusing spirit that "gave it in," and the recording angel that wrote it down. And if the fictitious character of the story

[1] The worshippers of the Wigtown martyrs won't thank the Principal for such support as this against "Memorials of Dundee."

was also *evident* to Lord Macaulay (as, according to Dr Tulloch, it *ought* to have been,) then had that great author sacrificed the integrity of history to a bit of miserable clap-trap, which he had neither the merit of composing, nor the excuse of believing. Well then. There *are* "fictitious embellishments" clinging to this martyrdom, but no more of a destructive quality than the graceful creepers that serve to keep an old tree cosy. They are, indeed, a subsequent growth, but a growth natural to the tree itself, like the verdant suckers of a glorious ash. This is curious, however, that when we recur to the period immediately before that when the natural embellishments may be understood to have commenced to spring, the stem they are supposed to embellish disappears altogether! In 1687 these embellishments did not exist. Certainly not, says Dr Tulloch, because "the consciousness of the immediate succeeding time" had not yet "learnt to look back with a reverent wonder and love to the tragic event which made heroic the former days." Brave words. But will the eloquent Presbyterian Professor undertake to show us this virgin sacrifice in its pristine purity—the *truth*, naked and unadorned, without a figment or a fig-leaf of embellishment? "Dainty Davie," according to Dr Tulloch's theory, was too close upon the event to command its *natural embellishments.* But how came he to be ignorant of *the thing embellished?*

Nevertheless, our learned censor lays great stress upon this embellished fable being "a tradition which has lived *universally in the hearts* of the peasantry of Galloway since the commencement of the last century." Here, too, we have eloquent verbiage, but neither proof nor argument. This "universality in peasant hearts" is an idea as fanciful as the language in which it is clothed, and more easily said than proved. The martyrdom of Little Red Ridinghood also enjoys that sort of universal life in *congenial* hearts. Who cared to test or impugn Wodrow? But there were other hearts in Scotland above the influence which then ruled the peasant's heart, that refused to admit the truth of that so-called *tradition.* Dr Tulloch forgets that when Wodrow and Kirk-sessions were busy with this martyrdom, at the commencement of the last century, the martyrologist had to work, as he himself

admits, against a *denial of the fact;* a denial "impudently" asserted "by the advocates for the cruelty of this period, and our Jacobites." He forgets, too, that when Patrick Walker, years afterwards, published his insane variety of the martyrdom, he also declared it to be one "*which some deny to be matter of fact.*" The vulgar reception and embellishing of the fable in certain districts of Scotland, its poetical adaptation by lovers of the romance of religion, or its careless adoption by uninquisitive minds, may be common enough. But its *universality*, as a proper *ab initio* traditionary belief, is an unwarrantable assumption, a fallacy, and a myth. Even the bare fact of the *drowning* was unknown in the century before last, when, if true, it must have been best known.

With evident self-complacency the Doctor parades his elaborate and original theory, that embellishments, and it would seem to any amount, are not only the natural produce, but the proper exponent, of a *true* martyrdom. "Its embellishments," he says, "as *told by Wodrow*, are *natural developments*, supposing a *basis of fact* granted; but the natural imaginative process which sufficiently accounts for these embellishments, could never create the fact, supposing it to be absolutely without foundation." Again, he says:—"*Admit* the fact of the drowning, the kirk-session records are perfectly intelligible; their *edifying exaggerations* are only the *natural halo* which the fact would gather round it; but *deny* the fact of the drowning and the whole story becomes a marvellous and incredible mass of invention." We are not to be caught by this logical coaxing, if logic it be. Granted, "embellishments" pre-suppose *something* embellished. But it does not follow that this something must be precisely the thing that Dr Tulloch desiderates. We cannot discover that the "edifying exaggerations of the kirk-session records" are of such a nature, however edifying, as distinctly to indicate that the actual thing exaggerated is a *martyrdom* of these two women. One kirk-session records it in the form of a solitary old woman held down in the water by a solitary burgh-officer, armed with the lethal insignia of his office and authority. Another kirk-session, about the same time, and in the very same district, introduces *two* martyrs on the tragic scene, surrounded by

lavish decorations, of scenery and dresses, the one previously omitted being by far the most interesting character, and destined in future to play the principal part—the "maiden of eighteen." Next, we have Wodrow introducing a *third* female on the stage, one still more interesting, being a child "not thirteen years of age," arraigned for high treason with the others, condemned with the others to be tied to a stake until drowned by the tide of the Solway, and only not drowned with the others per favour of the martyrologist not carrying that "edifying exaggeration" any further. Was the maiden martyr a natural embellishment emanating from the fact of the old martyr? Or was the child a natural embellishment growing out of the fact of the other two? What is the true thing that was embellished? We are forcibly reminded, by all this, of another well-known legend, not quite so old as Polycarp, that of the atrabilarious subject, namely, who vomited something as "black as a crow," and then, through an arithmetical progression of "edifying exaggerations," became immortalized as that marvellous martyr to bile, who brought up three black crows in full plumage. It has never been thought in this case, that the imaginative progression of the crows, even had the increase been carried to three hundred, was utterly inexplicable, unless the disgorging of one crow, for a "basis of fact," were admitted, as some reasoner might have desiderated. But Dr Tulloch must forgive one of the Dundreary school of logic for going slowly and gingerly over that logical ground of his once more. The thing embellished being *true*, it is easy to understand and account for any *false* embellishments. That is a natural halo of falsehood emanating from truth. But if we are to suppose the thing embellished to be as false as the embellishing thing, then the Professor is nonplust. Is that it? Poor "dear Margaret Wilson!" She was *drowned* to be sure. Without that basis of fact she could not have been embellished. But alas! the bright crown of her martyrdom, so long worshipped in Scotland, has been resolved into a *Will-o'-the-Wisp* by the Primarius Professor of Divinity at St Andrews! It is nothing but "a halo" of false embellishments!

Of what earthly, or heavenly, use to the Calendar of the

Covenant, is the bare fact of the drowning? What the Covenant insists for is a *martyrdom*, and a martyrdom perpetrated by the *Government of the Restoration*. Now if these women, instead of being executed in immediate fulfilment of their sentence (which is the *only* version of their tragedy that has ever come to us, either from tradition, Kirk-sessions, or Orange chroniclers), were reprieved and pardoned by the Government under which they were condemned,—a state of the case which is *proved*, and which Dr Tulloch concedes,—the *martyrdom* is gone. And if the more modern theory, of their having been *lynched* nevertheless, in the face of hundreds of their zealous friends, by a few murderous "official agents," acting *against* the mercy of the Government and the Crown, and never called to account for that rebellious deed, of which not a shadow of a record is anywhere to be found,—if, we say, the slightest reflection of an intelligent mind must come to the conclusion that this supplementary theory is the mere *straw-catching* struggles of a convicted calumny, and bears the stamp of *nonsense* on the very face of it,—then the *murder* is gone too! What remains? An *accidental* drowning, by local officials "carrying out the sentence which they *did not know* had been reprieved? This is not even Wodrow's supplementary theory. It dates no further back than newspaper scribbling subsequent to the publication of "Memorials of Dundee." We have now shown it to be impossible It is impossible, under all the circumstances, that the fact of a reprieve recorded in Edinburgh on the 30th of April was unknown on the 11th of May at Wigtown, supposing the women to have been there awaiting the result of the efforts to save them. Moreover, by the 11th of May there was no existing sentence against them capable of being accidentally "carried out." The assumed error in the *record* of the reprieve—*Edinburgh* for *Wigtown*—has nothing whatever to do with the question of the fact of the reprieve having reached Wigtown. Dr Tulloch has not taken up the *accident* theory, although he says that the simple question to be solved, is—"Were these women really drowned or not?" But that is *not* the question. The question, truly, is this: Were these women *officially drowned at Wigtown*, under a show, at least, of *Government authority and support*, whether by the regular

act of the Government, constituting a *martyrdom;* or by a cruel outrage on the part of Government local agents, constituting a *murder;* or by a blunder of the Executive, belonging to the chapter of *accidents?* Now, each and all of these alternatives have been disproved beyond the reach of rational contradiction. Not one of them can be taken to furnish Dr Tulloch's postulate of a "basis of fact." An *official drowning*, under any of the three above categories, is totally out of the question. But they have all been mooted in their turn. Then they all must resolve into "embellishments," growing out of some other basis of fact. What, then, are we to grant now? What will satisfy the Professor's postulate, and relieve him from the predicament he seems to dread of being utterly nonplust? "Admit the women to have been *drowned:*"—"Admit the fact of the *drowning*,"—he pleads, piteously. If I admit the drowning, Doctor, call me a "soused gurnet," settle the embellishments as you may.

And is the logic of St Mary's so commanding, and infallible, as to oblige us to "admit the fact of the drowning," in the face of irresistible evidence that the women *were not drowned?* Must we admit it in the face of proof that they were *reprieved and pardoned?* In the face of proof that they were alive in Edinburgh at the very time they are said to have been drowned at Wigtown? In the face of the negative evidence of the Burgh Records of Wigtown, that no such execution had occurred there? In the face of proof that both did take the Abjuration Oath, at Edinburgh, for refusing to take which, with "an enthusiasm" (says Lord Macaulay) "as lofty as any that is recorded in martyrology," Margaret Wilson is figured to have been drowned in the Solway? In the face of the fact, that Sir George Mackenzie, the Lord Advocate, emphatically declared the reign of James II. in Scotland to be innocent of the execution of any State criminal of the female sex, by any form of death whatsoever? In the face of the fact that the Cameronian pamphleteer, who answered Sir George in detail, tacitly admitted that particular statement? In the face of the fact that that statement is negatively confirmed by Fountainhall? In the face of the fact that that statement is *exactly corroborated* by the Cameronian accusa-

tions of cruelty, in executing women, contained in various papers, framed by the bitterest opponents of Government in aid of the Orange invasion? In the face of the fact that every authentic record of their proceedings evinces the greatest anxiety on the part of the Government to exercise forbearance towards State criminals of the female sex? In the face of the fact that neither record, nor journal, nor letter, public or private, of the period, affords a trace of these women having been put to death? Depend upon it, Doctor, the *drowning*, too, is an *embellishment*, unless it be they drowned themselves.

But can we not find another "basis of fact," that will dispense with the drowning in that quality? Both these women, with the true spirit of Scotch Martyrs, refused to take the Abjuration Oath. For this fanatical obstinacy, *coram publico*, they were remitted to a jury, and condemned to die *by drowning*. That it was a very sad scene, a lamentable display of ignorant, misguided fanaticism, occurring in the midst of much popular excitement, and many humane attempts to bring the poor women to their senses, we have no manner of doubt. *There* is the real "basis of fact." That satisfies the Principal's postulate. The *drowning* is not the *thing embellished;* it is only the chief *embellishing thing.*

SECTION VII.

An Alibi proved for the Provost of Wigtown against the Evidence of the Ghost of old Margaret Lauchlison.

Among those whom Wodrow libels as prominently engaged in the martyrdom, or the *lynching*, of these two women, is William Coltran of Drummoral, who was Provost of Wigtown in that year 1685. The martyrologist, through one of his numerous clerical correspondents, had learnt, late in the year 1717, that one *Elizabeth Milliken*, said to be a daughter of the *old* saint, Margaret Lauchlison, was still living in the parish of Kirkinner, herself now aged, maimed, and a pauper. Moreover, that, in the year 1708, this old woman had *dreamed a dream*,

which the minister of Kirkinner had failed to gather, in 1711, but which was very germain to the matter of the Wigtown martyrdom, and brought Heaven itself to witness against Provost Coltran. Wodrow, the keenest nose in Scotland for a kirk miracle, quests it out forthwith. He puts himself into communication with the then minister of Kirkinner, one Mr William Campbell, and is in due time "refreshed" with the following reply, dated 11th April 1718:—

"R. D. B. [Reverend and Dear Brother],—I'm particularly refreshed to understand from Mr Miller that you'r weel. In compliance with your desire anent Elizabeth Millikin's dream, know that I went and discoursed her this day, in order to give you the genuine account of it. The said Elizabeth dreamed, some weeks or months before the Quarter Sessions that met in November 1708, that her mother, Margaret Lauchlison, came to her, at the Cross of Wigton, with garb, gesture, and countenance that she had five minutes before she was drowned in Bladnoch, and said to her, '*Elizabeth, go and warn Provost Cultrain that he must shortly compear before the tribunal of the great God, to answer for his ways*;' and immediately her sleep was broken, and it made such an impression upon her, that she resolved, for her own exoneration, and the Provost's edification, prudently and meekly to communicate the said dream to the said William Cultrain of Drummorral, with the first convenience; but not finding or expecting that, she told the dream to Bailie Lafries, Drummorral's friend—being married to Lady Drummorral's sister—a man of age, gravity, and experience, and an elder in Wigton; and solemnly desired and engaged him to signify the said dream to the said Drummorral; and she doubted not but the said Bailie Lafries did tell the said Drummorral. And, *accordingly*, in the beginning of November 1708, he rode from Wigton to the Quarter Session of the Justices of the shire, that met that time at Stranraer, and there, on the Wednesday, at the Court table, was suddenly struck with a lethargy, was carried to his quarters, and continued speechless till Saturday the 8th of November, and then died."

This important communication had induced Wodrow to write again, but the rejoinder from his friend, dated Kirkinner, May 14, 1718, was not so satisfactory. The Rev. William Campbell then writes:—

"R. D. B.—Next morning after I was favoured with yours, I *discoursed* Elizabeth Milliken, but she cannot give you farther satisfaction as to the circumstances of her dream; only she dreamed it in her own bed, in the town of Barnbarroch; *and all the relations of Provost Coltrain and Bailie Lafries deny they know anything of the Bailie's informing the Provost, or the Provost's answer.*"

It is material to know what manner of woman this dreamer

was, and fortunately that information is afforded in Mr Campbell's first letter :—

"The said Elizabeth is poor but pious; a widow indeed, *the worthy daughter of such a martyred mother.* It has pleased God lately to afflict her by a *sore fall* in her walking home from this church, and having a Bible under her arm, and falling with a great deal of violence upon that side where the Bible was, it has *broken some of her ribs*, and disables her for business. I have been her acquaintance for sixteen years. I know she is *poor and straitened*, but I never heard her say she wanted anything. If ye please, procure, and send Mr Martin, bookseller in Edinburgh, some supply."

We would like to have cross-examined this old woman, or to have heard the precise mode in which the minister "discoursed" her on the subject. That he had done so with the belief strong in his own mind that the *martyrdom* of old Margaret Lauchlison was an incontrovertible fact, may be gathered from his own letter. But we now know that that assumed fact is a fable. Considering the maimed and aged state of this pauper, that her mother was actually drowned, as described in the Kirkinner Session-book of 1711, is a hallucination or confusion which she might very easily imbibe from her minister, who was assuming the fact, and much interested to have it embellished as a fact. If no more were known than what these letters disclose, then, even this second-hand evidence, from the daughter, referring to the "*garb, gesture,* and *countenance* that she (her mother) had five minutes before *she was drowned in Bladnoch,*" would necessarily convey a belief, that here was the evidence of an *eye-witness,* who had the best *causa scientiæ,* and who could not be mistaken. But then, we now happen to know more than either the daughter or the minister who discoursed her seem to have known. We *know* that the Kirkinner record on the subject, of date seven years prior to this ministerial precognition of the old invalid, is a false record; false in fact, and calumnious in spirit, from whatever source derived. This hearsay evidence of 1718 stands on the same false footing. It is all based upon *ignorance of the facts,* that Margaret Lauchlison was allowed to petition for her life; that she petitioned the Privy Council to be allowed to take the Abjuration Oath; that she was removed to Edinburgh; that she there *did take* the Abjuration Oath, between the 13th and the 30th of April 1685, and was *pardoned* in

consequence. These facts were utterly unknown to Wodrow (so he says himself), in 1718. Manifestly, the minister of Kirkinner was in the same state of ignorance. Then, what is the value of their research? And what was the mental condition of this old maimed pauper, who could not *enlighten them* as to the *real history* of her own mother in so important a particular as her petition for life and consequent reprieve?

Let us try it by the formula of Dr Tulloch's theory of *embellishments.* The *ghost* will at once be admitted an embellishment. What is the "basis of fact" to which it forms the "natural halo?" Of course, that Provost Coltran had been tyrannically conspicuous in the cruel martyrdom. *Grant that,* and the ghost is easily accounted for as "a natural development." *Deny that,* and the old woman's evidence "becomes a marvellous and utterly incredible mass of invention." But it cannot be granted. For it is now *proved,* that Provost Coltran was absent from Wigtown, and could not possibly have taken any part whatever in the sacrifice. This fact is placed beyond question by the *Burgh Records of Wigtown* (already quoted in the first part of this investigation), where the following entry appears:—

"Wigton, June 26, 1685.—Convened—the Provost, the two Bailies, [and twelve Councillors named]. The which day, William Coltrane, Provost, who was elected Commissioner to the Parliament, having *returned,* has made his report as follows, viz.—that he was *seventy-three days absent,* and that he gave in three rex-dollars and ane half-dollar with his commission; and that he gave one dollar to Bartholomew M'Kean, for his reverting to the town's papers—which, in haill, extends to the sum of two hundred twenty and four pounds and fifteen shillings Scots money, at ane rex-dollar ilk day; conform to the former Act," &c.

Now, if the Provost was absent for *seventy-three days prior* to 26th June, he must have been absent *at least* since the 14th of April *inclusive,* which was the day after the condemnation of the two women at Wigtown. But this calculation assumes that the Town-Council held their sederunt (26th June, at which the Provost was present), and received his report, the very day after his return, which is not likely. So, in all probability, he had been absent from Wigtown when the women were condemned, as well as upon the alleged day of their exe-

cution; and certainly he was not on the Commission that tried them.

Provost Coltran being thus completely exonerated (for the first time during a century and a-half past), notwithstanding the testimony of the *ghost*, we have to seek for another "basis of fact." The *ghost story* might be (upon Dr Tulloch's principle), a natural false growth out of such a fact as that Provost Coltran had been conspicuous in the cruel tragedy. But that fact proving to be an embellishment also, it cannot, in its turn, be so easily accounted for as a *natural* false growth out of such a fact as that the women were drowned. The ghost lied. We are not bound to be *polite* to a ghost. Provost Coltran was at the scene of the *pardon*, and not of the *martyrdom*. Now, assuming it for the fact that my Lord Justice Lagg, and Captain-Lieutenant Winram of the Dragoons, took these pardoned women, and *ex proprio motu*, and in the face of a hostile and remonstrating mob, hunted them to death in the Blednoch as if they had been witches or water-fowl,—that Provost Coltran was a chief actor in that ploy, and was suddenly summoned to Heaven as a judgment therefor, is a ghostly embellishment which seems to have no natural affinity to the assumed fact. What between the ghost and the minister, the brain of this crushed old woman would seem to have been addled on the subject; and, considering the *proved* facts of the case, her evidence, as reported, can lead to no other conclusion.

There happens to be, however, a *proved* "basis of fact" capable of accounting for all the embellishments, including both the ghost-story and the drowning, when derived from such a source as this unfortunate old pauper, *discoursed* by a martyrological minister begging the question. Her mother had been tried for high treason at Wigtown thirty-three years before, had been capitally convicted, and condemned to be drowned. The memory of that awful event, with all its necessary concomitants of fanatical excitement, persuasions, distress, and alarm, would doubtless still weigh upon the old woman's mind. With the *preliminary* history of the criminal, her arrest and imprisonment, the Provost of course would be officially concerned. That she had arrived at mercy through a stormy and dangerous passage cannot be doubted. In the Kirkinner Ses-

sion-book we find the following suggestive *item*, set down as a "suffering." "William Karr in Borland, *anno* 1685, was *imprisoned with* the said Margaret Lauchlison, and *made his escape.*" The old woman was *not drowned.* But she had been *condemned to be drowned.* There (again we say) is the real fact of the 17th century. *All the rest* belongs to the "edifying exaggerations of Kirk-session records," (the language is Dr Tulloch's), and Kirk martyrologists, of the 18th century.

SECTION VIII.

That all the various versions of the Wigtown Romance are manifestly based upon falsehood, contradictory of each other, and incredible in themselves.

Having disposed of the theory of a martyrological "basis of fact" surrounded by a "natural halo of false embellishments," let us now consider the case under the more intelligible aspect of a basis of falsehood overlaid by a variety of incredible and contradictory embellishments, according to the fancy of ignorant and unscrupulous embellishers.

There is not a variety of this martyrdom, from Alexander Shields' "short hint" in 1690, to Wodrow's long calumny in 1722, that is not manifestly based on falsehood, *in essentialibus.* One and all involve the statement, that these two women were drowned at Wigtown on the 11th of May 1685, passing at once, without a symptom of relenting, from a lawless sentence to a barbarous execution. One and all are based upon the assumption, that the Government of James II., in Scotland, was a Government by savages, who spared neither sex, nor age, nor childhood, nor piety, nor innocence, in their murderous decrees, and who were especially cruel and relentless in their treatment of tender and saintly females, whom they *habitually* drowned "for their religion." And this, unquestionably the basis of the Wigtown martyrdom, in all its varieties, is now proved to be so intensely untrue, that to reconcile it with any-

thing but the most virulent spirit of calumnious falsehood, is purely impossible. And when we come to examine the details, of the different versions, of this fanatical imposition upon History,—this low-born libel upon all the best blood of Scotland,—we find them so incredible in themselves, and so contradictory of each other, that no reflecting mind can escape from the conclusion, that this is a gross case of falsehood heaped upon falsehood, and not a case of natural embellishment superinduced upon substantial facts.

The earliest version of the double martyrdom, in full bloom, is that recorded in the *Penninghame* Session-book. This we have given *in extenso* (pp. 102–3) from the published text of that record, which had been given out by the parish minister to Wodrow, for the purposes of his History. Part of this, the tit-bit, was culled, from Wodrow, by Lord Macaulay, nearly *verbatim*. But the noble historian was too wary to shake the credit of that clap-trap episode in his History of England, by also repeating, from Wodrow, the *incredible domestic history* of the family of the Wilsons, which the martyrologist also obtained from the Penninghame Session-book, in that extract given him by his friend Mr Rowan, the minister, who had *gathered* and *prepared* it. If ever a story bore the stamp of falsehood upon every line of it, we have it there. The father of these children, a substantial and wealthy farmer on the estate of a brother of the Earl of Galloway, was strictly, and by inclination, *Episcopalian*. He was not only a prudent *Conformist*, but, upon principle, he was of that persuasion "to ane excesse." His wife, the mother of these children, was of the same persuasion, being "without any challenge for her religion." No one of common intelligence, or of ordinary reading on the subject, could entertain a doubt that this character of the heads of a family in the year 1685 necessarily infers that they must have been in high favour with Government, under no suspicion or observation whatever, and as far as possible removed from the chance of persecution. But we are actually told that the *Posse Comitatus* was raised to support the *military*, "with hue and cry," in pursuit of the children of such parents, two of them females, as if they had been lions and tigers escaped from a menagerie. At the commencement

of the year 1685 the Government were wholly intent upon the alarming prospect of Argyle's invasion. Their great object of pursuit was armed conventicle outlaws, lurking and wandering about the west and south, with the view of ere long joining the invading army, and meanwhile exciting the people, waylaying the poor soldiers on duty, and murdering the loyal. As for hunting children for not "hearing curats," the Executive of 1685 would as soon have thought of hunting sparrows on the housetop. The Kirk-session story of the mental condition, the polemico-religious devotion, of these children, taking a violent part, and in such public questions, against both their parents, is not *in rerum natura*. Neither will it stand a moment's comparison with the history of the period. When Claverhouse was reducing the rebellious districts in 1682 (which he did without shedding a drop of blood), for a time he required every *adult* to show in the Established Church, that he might be able to distinguish the wolves from the flock. But at no time was it the inclination, or the system of the Restoration Governments to punish old or young for merely holding Covenanting opinions, and being attached to the anti-prelatic form of church government and worship. Conventicles were prohibited, and the preaching at them, and frequenting and following them was denounced, and endeavoured to be crushed by an impolitic *brutum fulmen* of legislation in 1670, that was never intended to be practically followed out. But these severe laws against conventicles were expressly levelled at them as "rendezvouses of rebellion," struggling to keep life in, and to revive the Dutch plot against the throne in 1666, and the Argyle regime of 1648. It was to meet that rebellious spirit, and those evil agitators in the kingdom, who accomplished in 1679 that brutal murder of the venerable Primate, over which Alexander Shields sang *Halleluja* and Wodrow chuckled with an ill-disguised delight. But a quiet Covenanter, taking care never to defy the law of the Government, and willing to absolve himself from all complicity with the Lynch-law of the Conventiclers, was as safe from Government prosecution as a loyalist. To pretend that the severe laws, passed from time to time as danger prompted, originated in an aristocratic design, or desire, to root out a conscientious and peaceable

form of religion from among a saintly peasantry, or (to put it in Lord Macaulay's words) "to extirpate *Presbyterianism* by *drowning of women*, by the frightful torture of the boot," is neither history nor sense. Observe this fact, recorded by the *whig* Fountainhall:—"12th November 1680—William Johnston and some other merchants were seized on upon a suspicion, but there being no evidence against them, further than that they were *strict Presbyterians*, they were *set at liberty*."[1] And if this was the disposition of the Stuart Government as regards "strict Presbyterians," what could it have been towards a substantial farmer (and his young family of *daughters*) who was Conformist and Episcopalian "to ane excesse?" his wife being of the same persuasion, and peaceable habits? This question, too, we are able to illustrate from the Privy Council Records. On the 23d of January 1679,—"The Lords of his Majesty's Privy Council do hereby give order and warrant to the Bailies of Leith, to set at liberty furth of the Tolbooth of Leith, James Lawson, *a boy about the age of fourteen years*, prisoner there upon the account of conventicles." That a boy of that age, at such "rendezvouses of rebellion," might so demean himself as to get lodged in the Tolbooth of Leith, is perfectly intelligible. But the terms of that order can bear no other interpretation than that the Privy Council ordered his release on account of his youth. Again, on the 29th of May 1685, just seventeen days after the date of "that high-handed outrage by provincial agents," of whom *Lagg* is assumed to have been the leader, there appears in the register a letter, addressed by the Privy Council to *Viscount Kenmure* and *Sir Robert Grierson of Lagg*, as the leading Lords Commissioners for Wigtown and the Stewartry, empowering them to seize the horses and arms of suspected persons, in reference to the alarming crisis of Argyle's invasion. If that murderous mutiny, by Lagg, against the *humanity* of the Government to two insignificant women, had occurred seventeen days before, the news of it must by this time have reached the ears of the Privy Council, and could not fail to have created the greatest indignation and excitement. Some indication of this would

[1] Fountainhall's *Historical Observes*, p. 8.

surely have appeared in the Privy Council instructions sent to that disturbed district. But what, on the 29th of the same month in which these women are said to have been thus *murdered*, is the tenor of the Government communication with the murderer, Lagg himself? Simply this composed and humane instruction, "*to report frequent accounts of your diligence, and of the condition of the place;*" to which orders this postscript is added—"*The Council doubt not but upon this occasion you will take care that honest men and their tenants meet with as little trouble as possible.*"[1]

Well, then, if in the month of May 1685, the disposition of the Government was that Kenmure and Lagg were to "take care" that loyal and peaceable men and *their tenants* were to "meet with as little trouble as possible," could it possibly have been that such an *excessively* loyal tenant as Gilbert Wilson is said to have been, should, from the month of February of that same year, have been persecuted to his utter ruin, and his young and innocent children, some of them *mere infants*, and two of them *females*, hunted to the very death because they "would not conform!" Are we to believe that a girl of eighteen, taking along with her, from the nursery of her Episcopalian parents, a sister of thirteen, and a brother of sixteen, all with their infantine minds devoted to martyrdom, and sternly made up to the Presbyterian *dogma* and battle-word, that "Christ alone is King and Head of His Church" (meaning none but their own form of a Church), rushed from their well-conditioned home, "fled, and lived in the wild mountains, bogs, and caves" (which harboured the assassins of Archbishop Sharp, and the midnight murderers of the good minister of Carsphairn), until brought back by the violent exertions of an Executive deeply occupied at the time watching Argyle's invasion, to dungeons, and martyrdom or murder; the *loyal* Episcopalian parents being at the same time robbed by Government of all their great plenishing, and consigned to utter ruin? Are we to believe all that story in the face of human nature? In the face of common sense? In the face of unquestionable proof that the Government of that period

[1] Register of the Privy Council, 29th May 1685.

were mercifully inclined even towards the most violent and dangerous women; that children, even up to their *seventeenth year*, were *expressly exempt* from the penal laws against treasonable sedition; and that the Government waged no war even against *strict Presbyterians*, if they did not make common cause with rebellion, treason, and assassination? And what are we to say of the minister and Kirk-session of Penninghame, who gathered, prepared, recorded, attested, and sealed with prayer the most abominable nonsense that ever outraged the truth and justice of history? How are we to reconcile, even with itself, this *prepared statement* given in by the minister of Penninghame, when he tells us that this Episcopalian father was persecuted, on account of his children, "for *several years;*" that he attended "the Court at Wigtown almost every week for *three years tyme*," on the subject, the persecution of the children having *commenced* in the month of February 1685, and been brought to its tragical *conclusion* on the 11th of May thereafter?

Nevertheless, it would seem, from the following passage in his Macmillan article, that the senior Principal of St Andrews desires to uphold those Kirk-Session Records for truth, and scorns the imputation of fiction! After narrating the whole story as if he thought it only a little "embellished," Dr Tulloch thus supports the record:—

"There is no evidence that the Kirk-Session Records of Penninghame and Kirkinner, Wodrow's authorities[1] (we do not need to *ascend farther*), are wilful fabrications, but every evidence to the contrary. The Records themselves appeal to living witnesses—among *others*, to a brother (Thomas) of Margaret Wilson—the young sufferer—who had borne arms 'under King William in Flanders and the Castle of Edinburgh,' and who was then, in 1711—only, after all, twenty-six years after the event—still living on *the remnants of the paternal acres* in Glenvernoch;[2] 'to certifie the truth of these things.' Besides, to those who know anything of the matter, it will seem next to impossible that such *documents* were *invented*. The kirk-sessions of Penninghame and Kirkinner were composed of a

[1] The *Kirkinner* record is not alluded to by Wodrow; it was *contrasted* with the Penninghame record for the first time in "Memorials of Dundee."

[2] This is an amusing improvement by Dr Tulloch himself upon the Kirk-session record, which only gives us to understand that Thomas Wilson was dwelling upon the ground of his father's old farm, but too much reduced to take a farm himself.

number of *grave and respected men*, who, whatever may have been their prejudices, would have shrunk from a falsehood with abhorrence. We are not bound to trust their judgment, nor even *reverence their faith*; but to suppose that these men wilfully imposed upon posterity *a fiction* (and if *the story* was *a fiction* they must have known it) is simply *incredible*."

But what, then, of the *Embellishments*, Doctor? What of your own previous admission, that "Wodrow's stories everywhere bear the stamp of *this imaginative development?*" For Wodrow got the whole of that story, *ipsissimis verbis*, in its fullest development, from that "grave and respected man," the minister of Penninghame. It is he who is answerable for all the embellishments. Do such embellishments, occasioned by "the imaginative fertility of the consciousness of the immediately succeeding time," not, in plain language, just mean *fiction?* And among the now *admitted* embellishments surrounding this martyrological romance, is it possible to avoid classing *the whole of that family history of the Wilsons?*

Equally incredible is the Session record of the trial and sentence. That the Lords Commissioners for Wigtonshire, of whom the *whig* Viscount Kenmure was *Convener*, did, under that special justiciary commission conferred upon Colonel Douglas,—(the instruction to which was that no female was to be tried or questioned who had not "been *active* in the said courses in a *signal* manner"),—serve a criminal libel upon a female child of *thirteen*, accusing her, in 1685, of being "guilty of the rebellion at Bothwell Bridge, Airdsmosse, twenty field conventicles, and twenty house conventicles," that the jury found her guilty, and that these Lords Commissioners condemned her to die, and in the face of the law, too, that the Oath of Abjuration could be tendered to none who were not "above the age of sixteen,"—of such a monstrous assertion as this surely we may say, that every unclouded mind must at once reject it with indignant contempt. Yet this is what was gathered, and given in to the Kirk-session of Penninghame by their minister, *attested for truth* by that clerical court, recorded *in perpetuam rei memoriam*, and sealed with prayer! What follows, by Dr Tulloch's own concession? Why, not only that these "grave and respected men" had recorded "a fiction," but the grossest fiction that ever insulted common sense; and that therefore, as the Principal decides, "they must have

known it." We do not call those *records* a "wilful fabrication." We do not say that those "*documents* have been *invented*." But we do say, that, from whatever source gathered, they *contain* fabrications, and inventions, of the most ignorant stamp; that those clerical agitators, in their strong desire, and predetermination, to get up a covenanting martyrology for Scotland, had avoided all the proper sources of historical truth in such matters; that they had raked the gutters of fanaticism for their facts; and so, shutting their eyes to human nature, and hardening their hearts against common sense, they did thereby "wilfully impose upon posterity a fiction," involving a most virulent calumny against James II. and his government of Scotland.

What reliance, then, can be placed upon that "attestation for truth," by the Kirk-session of Penninghame, and what is the respect due to its clerical or religious character? The leading fact which it thus solemnly vouches, is, that these two female martyrs were led forth to execution, and drowned, as the *immediate* result of their trial and condemnation. That this is what the Penninghame record means, and what was understood by the minister, Robert Rowan, who gave the extract to Wodrow, is also manifest from the fact, that Wodrow himself so understood it, and so *narrated it in his History*, until *better informed* by the Privy Council Register; which, however, only induced him to add a garbled and deceptive posteript. Now that story of an immediate execution is *proved to be false*. What follows? The attestation of it by the Kirk-session of Penninghame is false likewise.[1] Then,

[1] The parish minister, in giving out the extract to Wodrow, of the sufferings of Penninghame, had taken the liberty to extract the *general attestation* by the Session, in a form much more curt than it stands in the original record, according to the Newton-Stewart print of it. In Wodrow's manuscript it appears in this form:—

"The above particulars being read in the Session of Penigham, the *twenty-fifth day of February* 1711 years, are *attested to be true* by personal knowledge of many of them [*i. e.* many of *the particulars*], and by incontestible information of *the rest*, except the particulars relative to Gilbert Milroy after he was taken from Scotland, the truth whereof they judge there is no ground to doubt.

"Extracted by ROT. ROWAN, *Clk. p. t.*"

—See "Memorials of Dundee," vol. ii. p. 91.

besides that impossible story of the Government persecution of the *loyal* tenants, and hue and cry after the *infantine* rebels, they further attest for truth, that the female child of thirteen years of age was tried for high treason, by Lords Commissioners of Justiciary, and condemned to die. The very statement stamps this also as a falsehood. But its falsity can be proved by another strictly contemporaneous record of the same fanatical cast, to which we now turn.

Dr Tulloch, in repeating this family history of the Wilsons, and the trial and condemnation of the child, which he almost dares us to disbelieve, calls it "The *current tradition* of the story." That it was not a *tradition*, (in any proper understanding of that word) we have proved. All that nonsense was absolutely unknown in 1687. Neither was it ever *current* in the country. On the contrary, we proceed to show that, in 1714, even that vicious collection of sufferings, the "Cloud of Witnesses," tells another story altogether as to the persecution of the child of *thirteen*."

Wodrow's publication of the Wigtown romance in 1722, from the Penninghame Session-book of 1711,[1] was anticipated by an anonymous rival, or rivals, who published a rude collection of that same sort of calumnious rubbish in 1714, and gave it the title of "A Cloud of Witnesses for the Royal Prerogatives of Jesus Christ, or the last Speeches and Testimonies of those who have suffered for the Truth in Scotland, since the year 1680." In this we have the earliest *print* of the Wigtown martyrdom, wherein we find the falsehood assuming a different form, and in some respects *retrograding* from the embellish-

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[1] In a fanatical History of Galloway, published by John Nicholson, at Kirkcudbright, in 1841, the Session-book of Penninghame is quoted, in illustration of the martyrdom in question, under this reckless assertion, —"We extract the following from the minutes of the kirk-session of Penninghame, *dated* 1685." This convenient mistake leads the unwary reader to suppose that the Penninghame record is *contemporaneous* with the alleged martyrdom. The true date is 1711. As this work, which is in two volumes, and crowded with notes and extracts, has an imposing air of research and authenticity, it was the more necessary to mark this dangerous blunder; which, however, we only impute to the ignorance of the covenanting compiler.

ments of the Penninghame Session-book. Wodrow was jealous of this collection of sufferings, which appeared while he was busy with his history, and seemed to forestal him, and outherod him, in its display of conventicle fanaticism. In a letter to the London news-vender, George Ridpath (already mentioned), dated 3d September 1717, he thus notices the rival work:—"As to the speeches of our martyrs, I have indeed inserted none that are in *Naphtali;* that book is so common in this country, and has been so often printed, that I still referred to it; and we have another set of speeches printed lately by Mr M'Millan's people, all upon one side, in the *Cloud of Witnesses*, which, if you have seen, I doubt not you'll think *does neither that party nor us any service.*"[1] Nevertheless, Wodrow concocted his own version of the Wigtown martyrdom, with the Penninghame record in one hand and the "Cloud of Witnesses" in the other. What he did was this. He squeezed out of the Cloud all that suited him; but when he found a statement, that tended to soften the savage character of the alleged persecution of the Wilson children, although that statement was, manifestly, a nearer approximation to truth, he rejected it in favour of the greater calumny of the kirk-session of Penninghame. In that earlier work the martyrdom is thus told, and entitled in the index, "A *Relation* concerning Margaret Lauchlane, and Margaret Wilson:"—

"Upon the 11th of May 1684,[2] Margaret Lauchlane, in the parish of Kirkkinner, and Margaret Wilson in Glenvernock, in the shire of Galloway, being sentenced to death for their non-compliance with Prelacy, and refusing to swear the oath of abjuration, by the Laird of Lagg, Captain Strachan, Colonel Mr David Graham, and Provost Cultron, who commanded them to receive their sentence upon their knees, which they refusing, were pressed down by force till they received it, and so were by their order tyed to a stake within the sea-mark, in the water of Blednoch, near Wigtoun, where, after they had made them wrestle long with the waves, which flowing, swelled on them by degrees, and had sometimes thrust them under water, and then pulled them out again, to see if

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[1] "M'Millan's people" were a Presbyterian clique who took a somewhat wilder flight than Wodrow. He was jealous of them.

[2] The year is so given in every edition of "The Cloud of Witnesses." But from the sequence of dates in the collection, it would seem to be a stupid misprint for 1685.

they would recant, they enduring death with undaunted courage, yielded up their spirits to God. The former was a widow woman of about sixty-three years, of a most Christian and blameless conversation, a pattern of piety and virtue, who having constantly refused to hear the curates, was much pursued and vexed, and at length taken by the soldiers, while she was devoutly worshipping God in her family, and being indicted of being at Bothwel-bridge, Airsmoss, and twenty field conventicles, and as many house conventicles, after sore and long imprisonment, without necessary refreshment of fire, bed, or diet, at length suffered this cruel death.[1] The other (Margaret Wilson) a young woman of *scarce twenty-three years* of age, after she with her brother, who was about *nineteen*, and her sister *fifteen* years old, had been long driven from their father's house, and exposed to ly in dens and caves of the earth, wandering through the mosses and mountains of Carrie, Nithsdale, and Galloway, going to Wigtoun secretly to visit the foresaid Margaret Lauchlane, was taken by the fraud of one Patrick Stewart, who under colour of friendship, having invited her and her sister to *drink with him*, offered them the king's health, and upon their refusal of it, as not warranted in God's Word, and contrary to *Christian moderation*, went presently out and informed against them. *Her sister was dismissed, as being but fifteen years of age*, upon her father's paying a hundred pounds sterling for her ransom. She [*i.e.*, Margaret] being examined whether she owned the king as head of the Church? and would take the abjuration oath? not answering to their pleasure, but adhering to the truth of Christ, was in like manner condemned, and after great severities of imprisonment, suffered the foresaid death. Being put oft into the water, and when half-dead, taken up again, to see if she would take the oath, which she refused to her last breath, while her fellow-sufferers were wrestling with the waves, as being put first in to discourage her, the persecutors asked her, What she thought of that sight? She answered, 'What do I see but Christ (mystical) wrestling there?' One of the times that she was taken out of the water, they said, Say 'God save the king;' she returning with Christian meekness, I wish the salvation of all men, but the damnation of none. Upon which one of her friends, alledging she had said what they demanded, desired them to let her go. But they would not, seeing she refused to take the oath. During her imprisonment she wrote a large letter to her friends, wherein, besides the lively and feeling expression of God's love, she doth, with a judgment not usual for her age and education, disclose the unlawful nature of the abjuration oath, hearing of curates, owning the king's supremacy, which was a thing the per-

[1] It will be observed that it is only the old woman who is here said to have been accused of having been at Bothwell Bridge, Airsmoss, and forty conventicles. It is not pretended, in this version, that the young females were indicted for anything of the kind. Yet the Penninghame kirk-session and Wodrow not only say so, but exclaim against the palpable falsity of the charge.

secutors meant by his authority, and proves the necessity of her suffering upon these heads."[1]—*Cloud of Witnesses.*

Wodrow published his Penninghame version in 1722. There we have the interesting young *dramatis personæ*, described as "Thomas Wilson, a youth of *sixteen* years of age; Margaret Wilson, of *eighteen* years of age, and Agnes Wilson, a child *not thirteen* years." In "The Cloud of Witnesses," on the other hand, published in 1714, to which Wodrow repeatedly refers, and undoubtedly copied from, we have their ages stated thus:—"Margaret Wilson, a young woman of *scarce twenty-three* years of age, her brother about *nineteen*, and her sister *fifteen* years old." Was this authority for these ages not as good as the minister of Penninghame's? Did this not look a little more like the truth? It was, probably, more the "current story" that Dr Tulloch speaks of, than the other version. Why, then, did Wodrow reject it? For the same reason that Lord Macaulay (who quotes the "Cloud") ignored it. The Penninghame version, however false, was a better martyrological calumny against James II. and his government of Scotland.

But the disingenuousness of Wodrow shows more palpably in his assertion of *Agnes* Wilson having been indicted, remitted to a jury, found guilty of high treason, and condemned to be drowned. "No matter now," he exclaims with holy indignation, "how false and calumnious poor people's *indictments* were; *Agnes* Wilson could be but eight years of age at *Airsmosse; all the three* refused the Abjuration Oath; it was *unaccountable* it should be put to one of them; the assize bring them in guilty; the Judges pronounce their sentence, that, upon the 11th *instant* all *the three* should be tied to stakes fixed within the flood-mark, in the water of Blednoch, near Wigtown, where the sea flows at high-water, there to be drowned. We *have seen* that *Agnes* Wilson was got out by

[1] Compare this last paragraph with the same in Wodrow,—see before, p. 11. The martyrologist had, manifestly, just copied it out of "The Cloud of Witnesses," with a little cunning transposition of the expressions, and knew no more about the matter. No such statement occurs in the Penninghame Session-book. This proves that Wodrow had "The Cloud of Witnesses" in his hand while concocting his romance.

her father upon a bond of an hundred pounds *sterling*, which, *I hear*, upon her *non-production* was likewise *exacted*."[1] But Wodrow had seen something else than this. He had seen, from "The Cloud of Witnesses," published eight years before, that soon after the alleged apprehension of the two wandering sisters, *Agnes* "was *dismissed* as being but *fifteen* years of age, upon her father's paying a hundred pounds *sterling* for *her ransom*." That is a totally different story. But even here we have the most palpable falsehood that was ever penned, mixed up with a reflected light from the truth. It was the law, a law never in a single instance departed from, that the test of the Abjuration Oath was only to be applied to such as were *above the age of sixteen*. Of course, the child of fifteen was *dismissed*. We don't believe she was apprehended. But that very law implied that any *ransom* was out of the question, and that the enormous ransom of a hundred pounds *sterling* (of which no official record exists) was exacted in 1685 from a loyal father relative to the humane fact of his female child being "dismissed *as being* but fifteen years of age," is a specimen of stupid, blundering inconsistency, which the Head of St Mary's may call a natural embellishment if he please, but which common sense must at once refer to a gross and ignorant spirit of falsehood. Yet it was not false enough for Wodrow. He preferred the falsehood as recorded and attested by the Kirk-session of Penninghame.

In 1717, still ere the illustrious Wodrow occupies the field, another anonymous collection of sufferings appeared, absurdly entitled, "Memoirs of the Church of Scotland, in Four Periods." It was written by De Foe, and therefore may be treated tenderly. Had Wodrow ever proved himself so *splendide mendax* as the author of *Robinson Crusoe*, he might have been forgiven his "Sufferings of the Kirk." It seems to have occurred to Crusoe, that the Cloud of Witnesses had not made enough of the old woman in the story. So he invents a grand martyrological duet between the sufferers, which being duly performed,

[1] But if this child, not thirteen, had been "got out" after trial and condemnation to death, what was she to be *reproduced* for? To be drowned? A hundred pounds sterling was a very large sum in 1685.

he then ties them to the *same* stake, and, without more ado, drowns them together, the "young maiden of *eighteen*" acquiring in his hands additional interest from being "about *sixteen* years old."

"The first I meet with is the story of a poor woman and a young maiden of about *sixteen* years old, in the West of Scotland, who were cruelly murdered by *some men belonging to* Grierson of Log, an eminent persecutor in that part of the country. They began by putting the questions to them above mentioned; and the first they offered, as what was most *popular* at that time in the world, and best served, as they thought, to expose the persecuted to the Court, was that of, '*Will ye say God bless the King.*' As I have received this story from *creditable* witnesses, take it as follows:—

"The *woman* told them she should pray to God to forgive the King his sins. The *maid* said, she would pray that God would please to give the King repentance. 'But it would be an *impious* thing,' said the *woman*, 'to pray to God to save, that is to bless, a Covenant-breaking, perjured *magistrate*, and in the prosecution of his perjury too;' and they both declared it was against their consciences, their principles, and the Covenant, and that therefore they would not do it. The *woman* said boldly, that while the King was a persecutor of God's people he was an enemy to God, and to the church of God; and she thought it was an abominable thing to ask of any Christian to pray to God for prosperity to the persecutors of the Church of Christ; for that was to say *God speed to them*, even in the very persecution itself. She was an *undaunted* woman, and challenged them to answer her in that particular. But they had nothing to say to her argument, but thought she would have some regard to theirs, which was,—*Pray to God to bless the King—or die.* 'Will ye kill me,' says the *woman*, 'because I will not bless those who God curses? The Lord forbid that I should do it, though I were to die a thousand times.' *Upon this* they fixed a stake in the sea, at the low water-mark, and *binding the poor woman and the young girl to the stake*, let them stand there till the tide flowed over them and drowned them both; being also *tormented almost to death by the cold*,[1] by standing in the water so long as till the tide was high enough to drown them. However, they both endured it with great constancy, and without the least offer of compliance with the barbarous adversary."

Then comes Patrick the Pedler, beating even Robinson Crusoe in graphic power and vigour of dialogue. Moreover, Patrick had no idea of the ogre *Lagg* coming off so cheaply,

[1] This artistic touch of *vraisemblance* is very characteristic of the author of Robinson Crusoe. Manifestly, what he describes is the scene at a *trial*, not at an *execution*. De Foe's version was entirely ignored, until quoted in "Memorials of Dundee."

as this reference of the murder to "some men *belonging to* Grierson of Log" enabled him to do. And so, in 1727, five years after Wodrow, we have, from a stall in the West-port of Auld Reekie, the fanatical Chapman's tract, which may be called the cheap cursing and swearing edition for the people.

"The broth was *hell-hot* in these days; they *wanted long-shanked spoons that supped with the devil.* I could give *many* instances, but at this time shall only mention the drowning of these two women at Wigtown, the 11th of May 1685 (*which some deny to be matter of fact*), viz., *Margaret Lachlan*, who was past *sixty-three* years; and some of her intimates said to me, she was a Christian of deep exercise through much of her life, and of high attainments and great experiences in the ways of godliness; and *Margaret Wilson*, who was put to death with her, aged *twenty-three.* The old woman was first tied to the stake, enemies saying,—'*Tis needless to speak to that old damned bitch, let her go to Hell.*' 'But,' say they, '*Margaret, ye are young;* if ye'll *pray for the King we will give you your life.*' She said,—'*I'll pray for the salvation of all the elect, but the damnation of none.*' They dashed her under the water, and pulled her up again. People looking on said,—'*O, Margaret, will ye say it?*' She said,—'*Lord give him repentance, forgiveness, and salvation, if it be Thy holy will.*' Lagg cried,—'*Damned bitch, we don't want such prayers; tender the oaths to her.*' She said,—'*No, no sinful oaths for me.*' They said,—'*To Hell with them, to Hell with them, it is o'er good for them.*' Thus suffered they that extraordinary and unheard of death."[1]

We recommend the study of this crowning version of the martyrdom to Dr Tulloch, as affording by far the best illustration of his ingenious theory, that "the *imaginative fertility* of the consciousness of the immediately succeeding time, learns to look back with a *reverend wonder* and *love* to the tragic events which made *heroic*[2] the former days." And is the conscious-

[1] Patrick Walker's "Vindication of Mr Cameron's name," originally printed as a chapman's tract, and reprinted in *Presbyteriana Scotica*, 1827.

[2] The *heroism* of the former days is curiously illustrated by the Whig Fountainhall's record of the death of the conventicle apostle Cargill:—"They all died a great deal more stout and firm than their leader *Cargill*, who behaved *most timerously to save his life* (if it could have been converted to banishment), and *minched their principles*, and *begged for a longer time*, that he might be judged in Parliament; but finding there was no remedy, he put on more staidness and resolution after his sentence."—*Historical Observes*, p. 45. The heroism of the former days also sometimes smelt of brandy. Those conventicle ranters, Kidd and King, were hanged in the Grassmarket on the 14th August 1679, for their share in Bothwell Bridge. "They died," says Wodrow in 1722, "in full

ness of the succeeding time, or times, always to look back in the vein of "imaginative fertility," and never in the spirit of truth and justice? How came Walker to *omit the reprieve*, noticed by Wodrow *five years before?* Is the Hind Let Loose in the seventeenth century still to ride rough-shod over History from her lair, or her chair, in the nineteenth century? In reference to the most necessary system of scattering the armed conventicles, and pursuing broken bands of outlawed rebels, and endeavouring to apprehend those conventicle preachers,—who, as Patrick Walker boasts, "came to the west of Scotland in order to *engage, preach up*, and *prepare a people to join Argyle*," —Dr Tulloch has the following passage, by way of make-weight against the proofs collected in "Memorials of Dundee" for the more laudable purpose of destroying such calumnies.

"But the *excesses* of the Government, or of its agents, were systematic and *cold-blooded* to a degree that stirs one with *detestation* after the lapse of nearly two centuries. Parties of soldiers hunted *poor wretches* for days over wild moorland tracts, their *only crime* being that they *would not attend the Episcopal service* (!), and when they startled them from their lair in the dank heather, and surrounded them, famished, and half-manaical, with their long privations, *shot them down remorselessly without giving them time even to murmur a prayer.*"

Mighty fine this, but all false. *C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas l'Histoire.* And how is it possible to attach any weight to Dr Tulloch's own argument, that "the Kirk-sessions of Penninghame and Kirkinner were composed of grave and respected men, who, whatever may have been their prejudices, would have shrunk from a falsehood with abhorrence,"—when we find, in the year 1862, the grave and respected Senior Principal of the University of St Andrews indulging in this old clap-trap of mythical facts, and mouldy pathos, in order to make a case of savage cruelty against the

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peace, serenity, and joy." But Fountainhall, the usual Whig counsel for such criminals, and who most probably witnessed their execution, tells us,—"Many thought Kid more composed than Mr King; and some adventured to say, that Mr King, for *infusing courage into him*, had drunk more than was fit for him to do; which,"—adds the Whig jurisconsult, as if no way doubting the fact,—"is a *most dangerous practice*."—(*Historical Notices*, vol. i. p. 229). Their treason was Dutch, and their courage was in keeping with it.

governments of the Restoration, which he could no more prove than he could have written Gulliver's Travels, or Robinson Crusoe? We have here language as violent, and a calumny as baseless, as if it had emanated from Alexander Shields, or Patrick the Pedler. Dr Tulloch is the less excuseable, seeing he had before him, in the very work he affects to treat as worthless, abundant materials for disproving that statement. The great leader in those scenes he so falsely describes, was Claverhouse. How they were conducted, why, and with what success, is now fully illustrated by his own admirable letters, reports, and despatches, all published in "Memorials of Dundee." Nothing of the kind can be more interesting than the true light thus thrown by Claverhouse himself upon all those military and executive operations. With a conventicle he never came into shooting collision at all, except upon one single occasion, and that was at *Drumclog*, where he was defeated with great loss, and was very nearly sacrificed himself. At that conventicle the leading assassins of the venerable Primate, were commanding. That conventicle carried the bloody banner of "no quarter." Upon one other occasion, Claverhouse caught the murderous rebels he was pursuing, an incident which is thus recorded by the whig Fountainhall:—

"20th December 1684.—Letters came from Colonel Graham of Claverhouse, then in Galloway, that he had met with a party of these rogues, who had skulked in the mountains,—if their retiring holes could be got, they are so *cowardly* they may be easily routed,—he had followed them, killed five, and taken three prisoners, some of which were of the *murderers of the minister of Carsphairn;* and that he was to judge and execute the three prisoners by his Justiciary power; and if his *garrisons* were once placed, he hoped to *secure and quiet the country.*" [1]

Now the fugitives thus vigorously, and most justly dealt with, were part of a band of armed outlaws, who, after murdering the minister of Carsphairn, had increased to the number of a hundred and eight, attacked the town of Kirkcudbright, stormed the tolbooth, released the prisoners, killed the sentinel, and carried off the town-drum, and all the arms they

[1] This notice by Fountainhall is the more valuable, that we could not discover, among the Queensberry Papers, the letters of Claverhouse to which it refers.

could find. But, generally speaking, these hill-rebels were *never caught*, and the troops were worn out, and harassed to death in fruitless pursuit of them. Of this, Claverhouse continually complains, in letters of graphic power. And such scenes, as the ruthless massacre of "poor wretches whose only crime was that they would not attend the Episcopal service," as described by Dr Tulloch, never occurred, in a single instance, under the leadership of Claverhouse, Lord Ross, Colonel Douglas, or any other officer, during the whole period of the Restoration.[1]

SECTION IX.

The Tomb-stones and Epitaphs.

Had that melo-dramatic martyrdom really occurred at Wigtown, it must have been followed, immediately, by a closing scene scarcely less exciting. That those minute and graphic reminiscences of such a *death* could exist so vividly in 1710, as a true tradition, and no reminiscence whatever remain of the *burial*, is impossible. The lifeless bodies of these interesting and dearly beloved martyrs, surrounded as they were in their last agonies by their own relations (as the story goes), and by hundreds, if not thousands, of a sympathising people, must have attracted the tenderest care of a multitude of heart-wrung mourners, whenever the tide retired, and gave up the tenantless clay. But not a word did the ministers of Kirkinner and Penninghame gather regarding either the scene or the place of their interment. Of all that multitude, and all those relations who must have wept bitterly at the closing scene, were there none in 1710, twenty-five years after the event, to point

[1] Colonel Douglas also made a very narrow escape in pursuing some of these ruffians. "January 1685.—Colonel James Douglas being one day in the fields in Galloway, with a small party of eight or ten, he meets with as many of the rebels at a house, who *kill two of his men*, and *Captain Urquhart*, Meldrum's brother; and had very nearly *shot Douglas himself dead*, had not the whig's carabine misgiven; whereupon Douglas pistolled him presently. Urquhart is the only staff-officer this *desperate crew* have yet had the honour to kill."—*Fountainhall.*

out precisely where they were laid? Whoever remained, not one, not even Thomas Wilson, said to be alive in 1710, and "ready to certify" all the rest, had furnished these kirk-sessions with a single trait of the interment, or a precise idea of its locality. These ministers, so deeply interested to place such a story of suffering beyond the reach of doubt or cavil, had gathered not a word on the subject. And, accordingly, neither the "Relation" in the "Cloud of Witnesses," nor De Foe, nor Wodrow, nor Walker, speak of their interment, or tell us distinctly where they lie. The actual spot is left, to this day, as uncertain as the grave of Moses.

Yet surely the closing scene, if not so harrowing, must have been as solemn, as awful, as heart-rending, and attended by as many hundreds of weeping witnesses, as that which preceded it. How comes it that no tradition of that scene "has lived universally in the hearts of the peasantry in Galloway since the commencement of last century?" Because *the women were not drowned.* What! says Dr Tulloch, "were the two women never *at all* drowned at Wigtown? And Wodrow, and *Macaulay* after him, and the Kirk-session Records of Penninghame, and the *old stone* in the grave-yard of Wigtown parish-church,—are they *all* pure romances—some of them much worse than this?" Yes, Doctor, yes, even so. We condole with you. There is pathos in that expiring cry of a long cherished calumny, "a beautiful old story." But even the "old stone," which we now proceed to consider, tells nothing but the falsehood that had been told before.

The first reference to the fact that these martyrs were allowed a grave other than the sand of the Solway, is to be found in the "Cloud of Witnesses," but not in its "Relation" of the Martyrdom. At the conclusion of that volume, an Appendix of Epitaphs is thus modestly introduced to the public by "M'Millan's people," in 1714.[1]

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[1] We here assume that the epitaph to *Margaret Wilson*, which appears in the later editions of the Cloud of Witnesses, was also published in the original edition 1714. But we have been able to discover only two copies of that original edition, and in both of them the appendix of epitaphs at the end happens to be imperfect. It is of little consequence, however, as regards proof of the martyrdom.

"The *Epitaphs*, or *Inscriptions*, upon the Tombs or Grave-stones of the Martyrs, in several Church-yards, and other places where they ly buried. The reader is desired to remember, that they, *being mostly composed by illiterate country people*, one cannot reasonably expect neatness and elegant poetry in them, and therefore will readily pardon any harshness in the phrase, or metre, which he may meet with."

This apology looks very much as if the *Epitaphs* had all been written for the collection in which they are published. But we shall approach the literary study of them in a frame of the critical mind far more humble and forbearing than that displayed by some of "M'Millan's people" in our own time. Among many other specimens of this illiterate muse, crowned with hemlock and nettles, appears the following:—

"Upon a stone in the Church-yard of Wigtoun, on the body of Margaret Wilson, who was drowned in the water of Blednoch, upon the 11th of May, 1684 [*sic*], by the laird of Lagg, &c.

'Let earth and stone still witness bear,
There lyes a virgin Martyr here:
Murder'd for owning Christ supreme,
Head of his Church, and no more crime,
But her not owning Prelacy,
And not abjuring Presbytery.
Within the sea, ty'd to a stake,
She suffered for Christ Jesus sake.
The actors of this cruel crime
Was Lagg, Winram, Strachan, and Graham.
Neither young years, nor yet old age,
Could quench the fury of their rage.'"

This "old stone," which Lord Macaulay also thought worth quoting, (and quoted wrong), Principal Tulloch seizes as a starving man would an old bone. "A memorial," he says, "in the churchyard of Wigtown, as old as 1714, commemorates the drowned 'martyrs.' The *antiquity* of this memorial does not *admit of question* (!) Even if the stone should have been *renewed*, there was *evidently* a memorial of some standing in 1714." *Quomodo constat*, Doctor? In the first place, it only professes to commemorate one of the martyrs. Again, this falsehood having been recorded, *in extenso*, in the Penninghame Session-book in 1711, an *epitome* of it, in the form of an epitaph, composed by some of the "illiterate country people," appearing in such a work as the "Cloud of Witnesses," published in 1714, was just what might be expected,

and affords no proof whatever of the martyrdom. It by no means even absolutely proves that those lines were actually inscribed on a tomb-stone at the time of the publication. They may only have been composed at that time, for that purpose. In Sir John Sinclair's statistical account of the parish of Dunkeld, in reference to a church-yard there, it is stated,—"One epitaph should be mentioned, which has been *frequently repeated as copied from a tomb-stone there.* But, though it was composed on the person to whom it relates, and who was an inhabitant of Dunkeld, it was *never actually inscribed.* Her name was Marjory Scot. One of her descendants is still alive, who recollects to have seen her, and reports that it was composed by Mr Pennycook. She died in 1728." Now this is far more likely to have happened as regards the voluminous collection of martyr epitaphs at the end of the Cloud of Witnesses, most of which appear to have issued from the same mint. But the question is of little importance, as it has never been pretended that any epitaph, upon either of these women, or any record of their interment in Wigtown church-yard, existed prior to the Revolution. This, too, is remarkable, that in the collection of 1714 there is no epitaph on old Margaret Lauchlison. Surely if they perished together at Wigtown in the manner narrated, they would not be separated in death. And was old Saint Margaret not as worthy of an epitaph as the young saint? Although this hemlock poet had neglected her, however, more modern records have assigned old Margaret Lauchlison a grave in Wigtown church-yard also, and a stone, if not to mark the spot, at least to assert the fact. The following is from the fanatical History of Galloway, 1841 :—

"These female martyrs were interred in Wigtown church-yard; a stone, with this inscription, is *in the wall of the church:*

"'Here lyes Margaret Lachlane, who was by unjust law sentenced to die by Lagg, Strachan, Winrame, and Grame, and tyed to a stake within the flood for her adherence to Scotland's Reformation, Covenants, National and Solemn League, Aged 63. 1685.

"'Here lyes Margaret Wilson, daughter to Gilbert Wilson in Glenvernoch, who was drowned, anno 1685.'

"'Let earth and stone still witness bear,
There lyes a virgine martyre here,
Murther'd for owning Christ supreme,
Head of his Church and no more crime;

But not abjuring Presbytery,
And her not owning Prelacy.
They her condemned by unjust law;
Of Heaven nor Hell they stood no awe.
Within the sea tyed to a stake;
She suffered for Christ Jesus sake.
The actors of this cruel crime
Was Lagg, Strachan, Winram and Grahame.
Neither young years, nor yet old age,
Could stop the fury of their rage.'"

Here the stone is said to be in the wall of the church; and the metrical inscription is not precisely the same as that published in 1714. The fifth and sixth lines are transposed, and the seventh and eighth lines are interpolated. Had Old Mortality been at work? Again, in the Reverend Mr Anderson's "Ladies of the Covenant," we have it thus boldly recorded, in another form:—

"The bodies of the two martyrs, on being taken from the waters, were buried in the churchyard of Wigtown. A stone was afterwards erected to their memory. The particular date of its erection cannot now be ascertained, but, from the freedom of its language, it is evident that it was *after the Revolution*. It is placed *in the wall of the church*, and the inscription upon it, copied *verbatim et literatim*, is as follows:—

HERE LIES MARGARAT LACHLANE
WHO WAS BY UNJUST LAW SENTENCED
TO DYE BY LAGG STRACHANE WINRAME
AND GRAME AND TYED TO A STAKE WITH
IN THE FLOOD FOR HER *
ME MENTO MORI

SURNAMED GRIER

* ADHERENCE TO SCOTLAND'S REFORMATION
COVENANTS NATIONAL AND SOLEMN LEAGUE
AGED 63. 1685.

HERE LYES MARGRAT WILSON
DOUGHTER TO GILBERT WILSON
IN GLENVERNOCH WHO WAS
DROUND ANNO 1685
AGED 18

LET EARTH AND STONE STILL WITNESS BEARE
THEIR LYES A VIRGINE MARTYR HERE.
MURTHERD FOR OWNING CHRIST SUPREME,
HEAD OF HIS CHURCH AND NO MORE CRIME
BUT NOT ABJURING PRESBYTERY,
AND HER NOT OWNING PRELACY,
THEY HER CONDEMND, BY UNJUST LAW;
OF HEAVEN NOR HELL THEY STOOD NO AW.
WITHIN THE SEA TYD TO A STAKE;
SHE SUFFERED FOR CHRIST JESUS SAKE
THE ACTORS OF THIS CRUEL CRIME
WAS LAGG. STRACHAN. WINRAM. AND GRAHAME
NEITHER YOUNG YEARS, NOR YET OLD AGE
COULD STOP THE FURY OF THERE RAGE.

Whether these be accurate transcripts, as they profess to be, we cannot tell from personal inspection. Certainly this last is not the stone of 1714; for the "Cloud of Witnesses" states the age of Margaret Wilson to be "*scarce twenty-three years.*" As we are not fortified either with the courage, or the grey mare of Tam o' Shanter, we think it best, under all the circumstances, not to venture into the churchyard of Wigtown, where haply the two Margarets' ghosts still walk. Whatever the condition of the old stone, or stones, whether in the wall of the church, or on the ground, they can add not one iota of proof in support of the martyrdom, nor detract in the slightest degree from the proof against it. They are at best an illiterate epitome, on stone, of a more detailed calumny recorded in the Kirk-session books of the eighteenth century.

The obscure condition (in their own time) of these poor women, and the imperfect condition of the parish registers of Scotland, especially as regards obituaries, have combined to baffle all our researches on the subject of their actual fate. We believe them to be dead now; and humbly trust they are in possession of brighter crowns of glory than they could ever gain from a fanaticism that was utterly devoid of the true spirit of Christianity. To destroy the false legend of their martyrdom is surely good service to a most important chapter of the History of Scotland, that has never yet been truly written by our greatest historians. Bishop Russell, in his excellent and most temperate "History of the Church in Scotland," justly observes:—"In the conduct of the rigid Covenanters, there is nothing more remarkable than their disposition to *slander*, and the *reckless intrepidity* with which they scattered around them the most *atrocious calumnies.*"—(Vol. II. p. 264.) *Ex uno disce omnes.*

Neither martyrdoms, nor religious persecution, can be truly and justly laid to the charge of the Restoration governments. The throne had to be defended against internal rebellion going hand in hand with foreign invasion. That a pious and peaceable people in Scotland were driven into acts of violence and wickedness by cruelty and oppression, is the usual apology for the obstinate and desperate struggles of the rump of the Argyle regime, to regain the most vicious rule under which

Scotland ever suffered. But that threadbare excuse cannot be verified by a single well vouched illustration. Good men may become martyrs under oppression, but never rendered murderers and cowardly assassins. Charles the Second signed the Covenants, and was crowned by Argyle. Charles the Second burnt the Covenants, and beheaded Argyle. Montrose would have told him, *and did tell him*, by that dishonest dealing with, and recognition of, your worst enemies, your father's murderers, you are disgracing yourself as a man and a Christian, and dethroning yourself as a monarch. The penalty was exacted in the Conventicle rebellion, and the Dutch invasion. But the Privy Council records of Scotland, those very records which Wodrow so dishonestly handled, of themselves suffice to bear witness, that, under the most critical circumstances for the Monarchy, and the most intense provocation to the Executive, the Governments of the Restoration never lost sight of the principle of humanity, and never failed to exercise forbearance, whenever that was consistent with a due regard to the lives of the lieges, and of the Sovereign, the suppression of traitorous and murderous plots, and the standing of the Throne. It was the desperate violence and wickedness of these plotters, and the ceaseless truculent agitations of the conventicle leaders, that occasioned the severities of Government, and called forth at times that lamentable law of the criminal code—a law far more shamefully exercised by King William and his minister Hamilton, after the Revolution, —the law of judicial torture. These, and *never* the innocent or religious, were the objects of Government pursuit, and Government retribution. No female rebel suffered death by drowning in either reign. Two suffered death on the gallows in the reign of Charles II., and compelled their own fate. Under the regime of Argyle and the Kirk, *eighty helpless women and children* were cast over Linlithgow bridge, at one time, and *six more* at Elgin, drowned and massacred by the very sect who, in the succeeding reign, raised the false cry of cruelty.[1]

[1] This horrible massacre is proved beyond question by other contemporaneous evidence, besides the statement by Sir George Mackenzie, in his "Vindication," which his Cameronian opponent did not contradict.

What zealots have recorded those poor Irish mothers and their infants as martyrs? Who have erected monuments to that wholesale sacrifice?—an awful tale of remorseless murder—a tale, alas! too true.[1] It is not the morbid, misdirected fervour of religion, falsely so called, the sordid bigotry, or the redundant use, and the grotesque abuse, of scriptural phraseology, that will suffice to characterise the whig-fanatics of Scotland. The climax and corner-stone of the character, is their sanguinary violence, not merely in defence of their own tenets and discipline, but in forcing the same upon all others, *vi et armis;* their tendency to outrage, in their ever aggressive obstinacy, all laws human and divine; their disregard even of the *semblance* of truth, in their deadly vituperations; and that vile system, arising out of such disorganisation of legitimate government, whereby every man may claim a divine mission to judge, and to execute judgment upon, his neighbour who opposes or offends him. Alas! the crimson vein of the Kirk's Lynch-law, may be too distinctly traced, running on, through all the various formations and strata of the Church as *reformed* in Scotland; and the in-

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[1] The contemporary chronicler, Patrick Gordon, speaks of the prisoners who were "murthered by the way at *Lithgoe*."—(*Britane's Distemper*, p. 160.) This corroborates Mackenzie. Leslie's line of march from Philiphaugh to Glasgow was by Linlithgow. Wishart records, "that there was a most cruel butchery of what prisoners the rebels had, without any distinction of sex or age; some falling into the hands of the country people were basely murthered by them; others who escaped them (and found some pity in them who had so little) were, by orders from the rebel lords, *thrown headlong from off a high bridge*, and the men, together with their *wives* and *sucking children*, drowned in the river beneath; and if any chanced to swim towards the side, they were beaten off with pikes and staves, and thrust down again into the water."—(*Contemporary Translation*, 1648.) This also corroborates Mackenzie, who gives the precise number of innocent women and children thus butchered in cold blood. David Leslie was attended by a staff of "gracious ministers." The picture is awfully darkened by the fact, that the Bible was perverted to enforce these murders. "Thine eye shall not pity, and thou shalt not spare,"—and,—"what meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen,"—were the texts by which, upon this and other occasions, the Covenanting preachers diverted from defenceless prisoners the rude mercies of soldiers weary of blood.

stances are but too many and conspicuous, in which the worst of murderers, assuming for their own savage ends the most sanctified garb of the sect, have been by them received as brothers, and their services acknowledged with scarcely disguised satisfaction and gratitude.

When Magus Moor sent forth a suppliant cry,
A daughter's writhing form was interposed;
But the sword stay'd not: the fell caitiffs closed,
And the Kirk kept her ancient cruelty.
How little boots that fair girl's fortitude,
Wounded and trod on, thou canst testify,
For Scotland's shame, O Magus Moor! where blood,
And scatter'd brains, invoke the vengeful sky
To launch its lightnings on the Covenant.
Foul murder! done by those who dare to draw,
E'en from the Book of Life, intolerant
Death-warrants! Bishops bleed by Hell's lynch-law,
But who would slay the Church, tilts with a straw,
Against a champion cased in adamant.

THE END

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